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# COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

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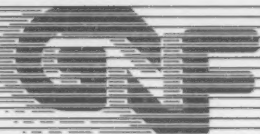




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# CHRONICLE

## Emotional issue in Vermont

In November of 1982, Chris Braithwaite, owner and editor of *The Chronicle*, a weekly newspaper in Barton, Vermont, covered a two-day custody battle between a member of a small, seclusive religious group and her defecting husband. The couple's five children were, like their mother, members of the Northeast Kingdom Community Church. The father wanted them out. The church, a close-knit community in the backwoods of northeastern Vermont, ardently upholds several Old Testament principles — most notably the belief that errant children should be beaten with "the rod." Testimony at the hearing included stories of bloody beatings of small children by church members who defended their use of corporal punishment as a fundamental tenet of their faith. The testimony, Braithwaite wrote in an editorial, "made us gag; it wrenched our gut; it watered our eyes." Indeed, the hearing marked the

Terry John/Burlington Free Press



**The price of commitment:** After Vermont troopers raided a religious sect accused of child-beating, editor Chris Braithwaite (right) drew criticism for collaborating with law-enforcement authorities.

beginning of what would prove for him a rocky and emotional path. Nearly two years later, it would place Braithwaite, a former business reporter for the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, in the midst of a widely publicized legal drama, posing once again the difficult question of when — if ever — a journalist is justified in taking an active role in the events he is reporting.

Braithwaite, who is forty, is a short, bulldog of a man, constantly disheveled, and cool and aloof in style. In 1970, he, his wife, and their four children settled in West Glover, where he farmed, made maple syrup, and fixed roads until 1974, when his friend Edward Cowan, a reporter for *The New York Times*, suggested that they start a community weekly. Soon after founding *The Chronicle*, the two parted amicably, leaving Braithwaite in control of the paper. For the last six years, he and his small staff have worked out of a tiny frame house with a wood-burning stove in Barton, developing the paper into a forty-eight-page tabloid filled with news about the isolated farming communities it serves in Vermont's rugged northern country.

Among these communities is Island Pond,

a town of 1,200 where members of the Northeast Kingdom Church began settling in 1978. They organized themselves into a private, self-sufficient community, closely following their interpretation of the Bible, and refusing to send their children to a public school system they see as evil. The women wear kerchiefs around their heads as symbols of their submission to men and God; the men are bearded. They live close to the land and have many children. According to Braithwaite, at first they seemed innocuous.

After the November custody hearing, however, *The Chronicle* kept a close watch on the church. Braithwaite covered the arrest of a church leader charged with beating a young girl intermittently for seven hours, until her backside was striped with eighty-nine welts. He attended another custody battle in which four children were awarded to their defecting father because, the judge said, "they [had been] subjected to frequent and methodical abuse by adult members of the community." As evidence against the church mounted, Braithwaite became increasingly frustrated by the state's reluctance to intervene. In April of 1983, for example, the state dropped two



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truancy charges against the church, in part because, according to Vermont's deputy attorney general, its only option was to fine the church, which most likely would have successfully pleaded that it simply did not have enough money to pay. "The walls around the Northeast Kingdom Community Church and its children are higher this Tuesday evening than they were six months ago," Braithwaite wrote in an editorial after the state's decision.

The groundwork — Braithwaite's frustration, anger, and concern — had been laid. Last April, state's attorney Philip White, who had read Braithwaite's accounts in *The Chronicle*, approached the journalist and asked him to help build a child-abuse case against the church. Braithwaite readily agreed, and White asked two other people to help: a state investigator and Suzanne Cloutier, a friend of Braithwaite who had frequently opened her home to defectors from the church.

On June 8, the four appeared before a District Court judge in Newport, armed with a stack of documents outlining church abuses, including affidavits from Braithwaite and Cloutier. The next day, the judge signed a warrant authorizing the seizure of "any and all rods or paddles" and every child under

age sixteen in the church. But when the four took their warrant to Governor Richard Snelling, and asked him to organize a force to execute it, he refused and chided them for taking the matter into their own hands. Although Snelling said that his administration was already on top of the situation, he allowed Braithwaite, White, and Cloutier to make their case to top state officials, who, according to Braithwaite, listened quietly and sent them on their way.

#### The raid that failed

Ten days later, state troopers with two new court orders secured from the same District Court judge descended on Island Pond in a convoy of fifty police cars. They surrounded twenty homes of church members scattered throughout the town and rounded up every member under the age of eighteen. More than one hundred children and their parents, who accompanied them voluntarily, were loaded onto buses without incident and whisked to a courthouse twenty-five miles away, where assistant attorneys general sought an emergency detention order to examine the children for signs of abuse. But in a surprise move a different judge declared the roundup a "grossly unlawful scheme," denied the state's request for a detention order, and sent

the children home.

The failed raid quickly became one of the biggest news stories of the year and political careers may falter as a result. Attorney General John Easton, who is running for governor, for example, has come under fire for his involvement, and some lawyers and politicians have sardonically labeled the day of the raid, a sunny June 22, "Black Friday."

Governor Snelling claims that Braithwaite and White had nothing to do with the state's decision to take action. The fact that the state did what Braithwaite and White had advocated only ten days earlier, he says, is purely coincidental. Others, however, speculate that without Braithwaite and White's intervention there would have been no raid. Either way, a number of members of the Vermont press corps believe Braithwaite went too far. "He really crossed a line journalists shouldn't cross," says Bob Sherman, chief of the Vermont Press Bureau, a former reporter for Jack Anderson and one of a handful of journalists on the scene during the raid. "He should have put down his pen if he was going to take up the sword," he says. James Welch, managing editor of *The Burlington Free Press*, says he was particularly sorry to hear of Braithwaite's involvement in the raid because of the high regard in which he has long

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held *The Chronicle*. "I don't feel strident about it, but I disagree with what he did," Welch says. "He's got a damn good paper, and I can fully understand his feelings about this. So keep writing; send articles to people in power; write editorials." In light of most reporters' ardent attempts to shield themselves from subpoenas and prosecutors, Welch added, Braithwaite's action "makes it harder for all of us."

Braithwaite, who will be spending the next nine months at Stanford University as a John S. Knight journalism fellow, says that a weekly cannot be expected to maintain the same distance from local events as a large daily. He did take care, he says, to make sure that *The Chronicle*'s single full-time reporter did not know of his involvement with White.

But ultimately, Braithwaite says, his decision to assist the prosecutor was beyond the realm of logic and journalistic ethics. "What it comes down to for me is the welfare of the kids, and I guess that is more of an emotional issue than an intellectual one. I can't feel any sense that I should have done otherwise."

*Leslie Brown*

*Leslie Brown, who covered the raid on the Northeast Kingdom Community Church, is a reporter for The Burlington Free Press.*

## Under the gun in Turkey

In March 1983, Ismet G. Imset, a correspondent for United Press International in Ankara, Turkey, was invited by the wire service to attend a month-long training course in London. A twenty-three-year-old native of Turkey who had spent several years living in the United States, Imset's coverage of spot news, politics, and human rights violations had established him as a promising young reporter. Upon arriving at the passport office at Istanbul's Gayrettepe police station, Imset says, he was blindfolded, beaten by police, and accused of being a "communist infiltrator working against Turkey's interest."

That three-hour ordeal, it turned out, was only the beginning of a Kafkaesque struggle between Imset and Turkish authorities that underscores the vulnerability of many foreign nationals who report for U.S. news organizations. After Imset complained about his treatment to UPI and the American embassy — something he says his police captors warned him not to do — his passport application was denied and he has been repeatedly persecuted by Turkish authorities. "I and my



UPI/Bettmann

*UPI correspondent Ismet Imset*

wife have faced every kind of threat and harassment over the last fifteen months," he says. "Our lives have completely changed."

Turkish officials deny that they are harassing Imset and claim that the travel ban

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imposed on him is the result of charges of anti-state activities dating back to 1978 and still pending in an Istanbul court. Imset, then a secondary school student, was arrested with a group of friends for allegedly writing left-wing political slogans on a wall. He was released two months later, after confessing to illegally owning a pistol — a confession that he promptly repudiated, saying it was extracted from him under torture.

Illegal ownership of a pistol is considered a minor charge in Turkey (Imset was not even required to be in court when his case was heard) and others charged with similar offenses by authorities have been issued passports. Moreover, in an April 1983 letter written just prior to a congressional vote on foreign aid to Turkey, Ambassador Şükrü Elekdag assured Congressman Stephen Solarz that "Mr. Imset will be granted a passport to travel abroad."

Since then, however, despite two security checks by the American embassy clearing him of a criminal past, Imset's situation has grown worse. In November 1983, the Istanbul court charged that, in addition to illegally owning a pistol, Imset had been a member of an armed gang, an offense carrying a minimum sentence of seven-and-a-half years in prison. About the same time, Imset says, he

began receiving anonymous phone calls saying that he and his wife would be charged with murder. Last June, Huseyn Kunter, a confessed murderer, accused the Imsets of complicity in the 1979 killing of Turkish banker Omer Suner. To make matters worse, throughout this whole period Imset has been subject to being drafted into the Turkish army, a dangerous place for a young man in conflict with the authorities.

Although UPI executives have repeatedly protested Imset's treatment to the Turkish ambassadors in Washington and London and have sent executives and correspondents to Ankara to press Turkish officials on several occasions, Amnesty International, International PEN, and several of Imset's friends in the Western press corps have criticized the wire service for its handling of the case. In a November 1983 letter to UPI president William J. Small, K. Simson of International PEN's Writers in Prison committee wrote: "We cannot help feeling that if a top-level UPI figure . . . had flown to Turkey and pressed the matter with the Turkish government at the highest level and with the State Department and Congress, the problem would have been solved long ago." When Imset's telex line was removed last spring after UPI's partner in Turkey sold its busi-

ness, Western reporters based in Ankara say that UPI, by not immediately installing a new line on its own, may have given the impression to Turkish officials that it is not fully committed to defending Imset.

William Small takes exception to such criticism and insists that UPI has not flagged in its efforts on behalf of Imset. "We are leaning on anyone we know who can be helpful," Small says, pointing out that Imset's troubles date back to his 1978 arrest and are unconnected to his job at UPI. "In the final analysis, only the Turkish authorities can grant him the ability to move in and out of the country," he says. In June, UPI sent its chief Athens correspondent to Ankara for a lengthy stay in an effort to persuade Turkish officials to issue Imset a passport.

Meanwhile, the murder charge against Imset and his wife has been referred to martial law authorities, increasing their chances of arrest, and Imset continues to report for UPI. "I just want to go to London in order to take the training course UPI is offering me and then to have a career with UPI," he says.

Robert D. Kaplan

Robert D. Kaplan is a correspondent for the Atlanta Journal and Constitution and ABC Radio News who lives in Athens.

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## Fine-tuning the FOIA

For the past three years journalism groups and civil liberties organizations have been lobbying Congress to stave off revisions of the Freedom of Information Act. In the current 98th Congress, for example, Senate Bill 774 is the latest in a series of attempts by supporters of the Reagan administration to "fine-tune" the FOIA by exempting various categories of government documents from disclosure. But while the two sides have been debating full-fledged reform bills, several government agencies, ranging from the Department of Energy to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, have been taking advantage of a loophole in the FOIA to do some fine-tuning of their own.

Subsection (b)(3) of the FOIA stipulates that any other piece of legislation which "establishes particular criteria for withholding [information] or refers to particular types of matters to be withheld" is also valid under the FOIA. In other words, subsection (b)(3) allows Congress to grant FOIA exemptions through a back door. Any amendments to the FOIA itself which would introduce a new category of exemptions are reviewed by the Senate Judiciary and House Government Op-



erations Committees, both of which are very aware of FOIA issues. But under subsection (b)(3) short riders exempting information from disclosure can be buried in lengthy bills having nothing to do with the FOIA. "Nobody really reads them entirely," says Mary Rogan, director of the Fund for Open Information and Accountability Inc., a New York-based watchdog, referring to the "package" bills into which (b)(3) exemptions are often slipped, "so it's hard to know that [the exemptions have been enacted] until someone actually wants the information."

A 1980 amendment to the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, for example, prohibits disclosure of the security measures taken to protect "special nuclear material, source material, or byproduct material" from theft or sabotage, which includes information about the shipping and storage of such material. In addition, other riders passed in the 97th Congress allow such regulatory agencies as the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to withhold, among other things, records of their investigations.

While agency representatives say that (b)(3) exemptions are necessary because the Freedom of Information Act is too liberal, journalists worry that valuable sources will be placed beyond their reach. A package bill drafted by the Securities and Exchange Commission and proposed to the current Congress, for example, includes a (b)(3) exemption for a category of document used by *Common Cause Magazine* to expose previously undisclosed details about the record of financial misconduct of National Security Council member Thomas C. Reed. Shortly after the magazine published its investigation in 1983, the story was trumpeted by the national press and Reed resigned. According to Daniel Goelzer, general counsel to the SEC, the proposed exemption is designed to prevent leaks of trade secrets and would not have inhibited *Common Cause's* investigation of Reed. "All significant details of [the Reed case] were public knowledge more than a year before the *Common Cause Magazine* article appeared," Goelzer wrote in a letter to the Society of Professional Journalists. But *Common Cause* editor Florence Graves says that many of the details of the Reed investigation — among them evidence that Reed had "backdated, fabricated information on, and signed other peoples' names to [financial] documents" — were not public until they appeared in the magazine. "If the SEC gets its way," the magazine lamented in a recent article about the proposed exemption, "the press and the public will no longer have access to records submitted to

the agency in the course of an investigation."

Pending FOIA legislation, such as Senate Bill 774, does not attempt to limit future (b)(3) exemptions. To be sure, S. 774 would require that a tally of (b)(3) exemptions be kept, but they would be listed only after they had become law. S. 774's authors do acknowledge that (b)(3) exemptions have

caused a problem. "Neither the Congress nor the American People," the bill's sponsors write, "know for sure how many (b)(3) exemptions exist or what their scope is."

Pam Kennedy

Pam Kennedy is an intern at the Review.

## Nader's unhappy raiders

For nearly two decades consumer advocate Ralph Nader has fueled his numerous public-interest projects with the idealism and loyalty of dedicated staff workers. Long hours, low pay, and total commitment are the price they are expected to pay for the privilege of doing what Nader has described as missionary work, and over the years hundreds of low-cost, high-energy activists — many of them college students — have been signed up to spread the gospel. "We look at our work as a public trust," Nader says. "If you are part of a cause, you're not part of a we/they type employment situation."

Recently, however, after firing the editor of his Washington-based magazine, *Multinational Monitor*, Nader has found himself

embroiled in a we/they type situation involving charges of unfair labor practices and a boycott by some *Monitor* writers.

Founded in 1978, *Multinational Monitor* describes itself as a magazine devoted to a "citizen perspective" on the often unchronicled abuses perpetrated by multinational corporations. Operating on a slim \$140,000 budget raised by Nader, the twenty-four-page monthly has featured articles on topics such as the export practices of American pharmaceutical companies, a bribery scandal involving several oil companies, and the way in which multinationals trample on local traditions in the third world.

In 1982, Nader hired Tim Shorrock, a thirty-one-year-old free-lance journalist, to

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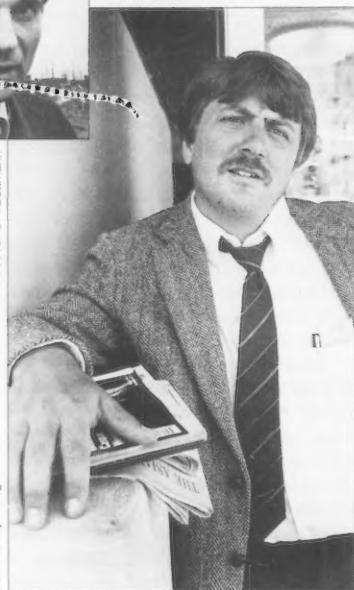




**Labor pains:** When Ralph Nader (inset) fired editor Tim Shorrock in a political row, he found himself with a union fight on his hands.

above: UPI/Bettmann

CJR/Harvey Wang



edit the magazine. A dedicated leftist, Shorrock sought to make the *Monitor* an outlet for investigative reporting as well as a useful resource for activists organizing against the policies of multinational firms. Nader, however, felt that the magazine should not become too specialized. "There was a lot on labor, but not enough on consumers," he says, "and not enough analysis. You can report on asbestos victims *ad infinitum*. You need to analyze ways corporations can be held more accountable." Several discussions between the two only deepened the rift: Shorrock wanted time to do more investigative reporting; Nader wanted him to edit with an eye toward expanding the *Monitor's* 5,000 circulation.

The relationship was further strained in February 1983, when, after Shorrock had discussed his political ideology with a reporter from *Human Events*, the conservative weekly published an article referring to him as a self-described socialist and suggesting that Nader was "making alliances with the extreme left." Nader, who has always strongly asserted his ideological independence, disavowed Shorrock's remarks. "He can say anything he wants as a private citizen," Nader says, "but when he speaks as editor of the [*Monitor*], he characterizes it as

socialist, which limits its readership and also is not true." Shorrock, who at the time apologized to Nader for his remarks, now says he was angered by Nader's reaction and what he believes is Nader's fear of redbaiting. "I think Nader is ultra-careful not to take political stands that would alienate him from his middle-American support," he says.

The conflict reached a climax last May. *Multinational Monitor*, together with *Mother Jones* magazine and Nautilus Research, an independent research organization, were preparing a story about the possible involvement of Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and Secretary of State George Shultz in the payment of bribes in the late 1970s by the Bechtel group of companies, of which both men were then executives. When one of their sources revealed that *The New York Times* was on to the story, both Shorrock and the editors at *Mother Jones* decided to announce their findings immediately, even though Nader, on reading a draft of the piece, had criticized it on the ground that it made far too much of the Weinberger-Shultz angle. (The story proved only that both men were in positions where they *might* have known about the misdeeds.) When Shorrock tried to phone Nader, who was out of town, to discuss the decision to rush publication of the article,

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Nader refused to talk with him; instead, he instructed another *Monitor* editor to hold the article until his return the following day. Shorrock, however, went ahead and announced the forthcoming story in a joint press release with *Mother Jones*. The next day Nader fired Shorrock, later deciding to let him stay on for three more months. "I gave the staff terrific responsibility and a major subsidy," Nader says, "and all I wanted from Tim was to respect the trust that no copy goes out that I don't read."

Shorrock's firing upset the *Monitor*'s two other staff members, whose earlier requests for pay raises (as editor, Shorrock was making only \$13,000 a year), a larger staff, or a reduced publishing schedule were refused. After contacting several unions, the staff sent Nader a letter on May 9 announcing that they were forming a collective-bargaining unit to

press for, among other things, Shorrock's reinstatement. By that time, Nader says, he had transferred ownership of the *Monitor* to Essential Information, a sponsor of investigative reporting projects which is headed by Russell Mokhiber, John Richard, and Joan Claybrook, three longtime Nader associates. Soon after, the three told Shorrock and the two other staff members that they were no longer needed.

Since then, the animus between the two sides has grown considerably. After Shorrock took notes and documents relating to the Bechtel story from the *Monitor*'s offices, the new publishers filed a theft charge with city police. (The charge was later dismissed in a pre-arrest hearing, but Mokhiber, Richard, and Claybrook still claim that the files belong to the *Monitor*.) For their part, Shorrock and the former staff members organized

a support committee made up in part of writers who agreed to boycott the magazine, and plan to file a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board accusing the *Monitor* of unfair labor practices. The publishers countered with a civil suit accusing Shorrock, the two ex-staff members, and a *Monitor* writer of conspiring to destroy the magazine and asking \$1.2 million in damages.

Mark Green, a former director of Nader's Congress Watch group, says he has seen such disputes arise repeatedly in more than a decade of association with Nader organizations and thinks they are ridiculous. "We're a movement," he says, "not a company."

Pat Aufderheide

Pat Aufderheide is a contributing editor of *In These Times* who lives in Washington, D.C.

## 'The magazine with a bad attitude'

On a Saturday afternoon last June in California's Silicon Valley, the fertile crescent of the new world of high technology, a group of papier-mâché-costumed pranksters stopped shoppers mid-mall. "Bite the hand that bores you!" a human-sized bottle of Liquid Paper called to passers-by. As a crowd gathered, a large IBM ("Intensely Boring Machines") and a TIED detergent box

("Bound, gagged & TIED to boring work for the world market, day in day out, for the rest of your life?") hawked *Processed World*, "The magazine with a bad attitude!"

*Processed World* chronicles the miseries of workaday life in the computer industry and the automated office. Its contributors and readers ("a separation we like to discourage," its editors say) are computer program-

mers, data processors, secretaries, bicycle messengers, and others who are perched on the lower rungs of the corporate ladder — and don't like it. "PW started as a forum for dissatisfied office workers," says "Helen Highwater," a founder of the magazine who works as a temporary secretary and who, like many of her colleagues at PW, goes by a pseudonym. "It's a sounding board for people to talk about what it's like to commute, to go to a job where people have arbitrary authority over you, and to do work which is meaningless or actually harmful."

Many of PW's contributors question the very notion of employment, and, not surprisingly, the magazine takes a hard line against business. "Are you doing the processing? . . . Or are you being processed?" asked the magazine's premier issue in 1981. The centerpiece of that issue, an article titled "New Information Technology: For What?" argued that computers have not delivered on the promise of providing more creative jobs, but instead have displaced many workers while tying others to monotonous "white-collar factorywork." PW has also discussed such hazards of high-tech industrial employment as the psychological side effects of working with computers and the dangers to health which some believe are posed by VDTs. But a large part of the colorful digest-sized quarterly is filled with real-life tales of toil, satire, fantasy, comics, and a thick section of uncut letters from information workers throughout the country. "We've struck a responsive chord in people who probably aren't used to writing letters to magazines, like secretaries and technicians," says "Maxine Holz," a PW founder. "They are relieved that they're not the only ones who

Open-air editorial: Members of the *Processed World* collective take to the street.



C.J. Harvey Wang





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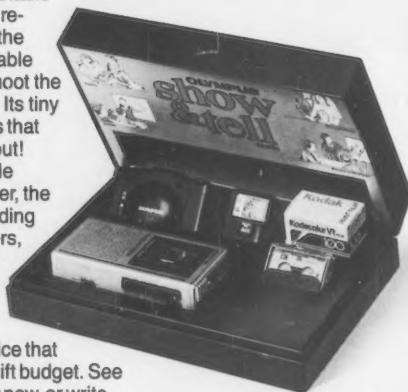
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think the work world is crazy."

First published from the back room of an apartment in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district, *PW* began life with \$700, a typesetting machine, and "plenty of paper unknowingly supplied by local banks." The magazine's founders, a disparate group, had no agreed-on political perspective but, according to contributor "Eric Cleric," "most had drunk deeply from the wells of anarchism, feminism, and situationism" — a critique of consumerism with roots in Marx, Dada, and surrealism. What they all shared was the desire to use humor to call attention to issues which they felt even alternative publications had ignored. "*PW* started in response to leftist media which never ask the questions that get at the heart of problems for technology workers," says "Lucius Cabins," one of *PW*'s founders. "The media never ask, 'Is there something wrong with human beings selling themselves as a way of life?' They rarely even look at high-tech working conditions."

After three successful years, and with a growing circulation of 4,000, *PW*'s fifteen-person collective now chips in \$250 a month to rent its own Haight-Ashbury apartment, which serves as editorial office and street-theater rehearsal hall. Each issue costs about \$1,600 to produce. Contributors are not paid and much of the labor is donated, including a large collating party at the end of each editorial cycle. Individual issues cost \$2 and a year's subscription is offered on a sliding scale: \$5 for "low income," \$10 for "steady income," up to \$150 for "corporations and government agencies."

*PW*'s editing process is also collective. Articles are circulated among the staff and comments are made in a process one editor refers to as "the appropriation of theoretical coherence." Political arguments often erupt and some losers have walked out on the group. "We don't sit around with ten principles to adhere to, but we don't ignore politics [either]," Cabins says.

For most contributors and readers, however, *PW* isn't so much a political pamphlet as it is an outlet for office-stifled creativity. Thus, members of the *PW* collective periodically don their costumes and head out to spread the word. "*Processed World* fights the despair of daily office life by being funny," says "Melquiades," who works as a technical writer in the Silicon Valley and has written some of *PW*'s more scathing attacks on high-tech industry. "We're dead serious about humor."

Laura Fraser

Laura Fraser is a free-lance writer and part-time office worker in San Francisco.





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# AT ISSUE

## Does pretrial publicity really hurt?

by DON R. PEMBER

The closure of pretrial hearings in criminal cases has become a serious problem for the press. Closure is usually justified by the court as a means of protecting the defendant from the danger that publicity about the case will interfere with the right to a trial by an impartial jury. Press lawyers have fought diligently to gain what are essentially procedural protections for the press — guidelines insuring that proper notice will be given before a hearing is closed, that a hearing will not be closed at all if some alternative means exists to protect the defendant's rights. But the lawyers may have been fighting the wrong battle. They should perhaps have been challenging the very notion that pretrial publicity can ever be so

damaging as to justify closing a courtroom to the press.

Social scientists have been investigating the impact of pretrial publicity on potential jurors for nearly two decades. In 1981 four Indiana University scholars summarized the findings of this research, focusing on seventeen experiments and surveys undertaken since the mid-1960s. These experiments, they reported, tended to show that publicity can cause persons to prejudge the guilt or innocence of someone accused of a crime, that prejudice can occur whether or not information about the crime has been presented in a sensational manner, and that publicity about a confession or a criminal record is likely to result in the most bias against the accused.

A reader of the seventeen studies cited by the Indiana researchers is impressed with the care and thoughtfulness of the scholars who conducted the research.

But something else is equally impressive — the totally artificial nature of the research settings and experiments. None of the studies was conducted using real jurors in real criminal cases. The law forbids this, forcing researchers to find other settings for their experiments.

In a typical experiment summarized by the Indiana study, test subjects were shown news articles about a hypothetical criminal defendant. Some of the subjects were shown articles that contained prejudicial information about the defendant; others saw neutral news reports. Test subjects were then asked to decide on the basis of the articles whether the defendant was guilty of the crime charged. Some researchers provided a more realistic setting. Thus, in an experiment sponsored by Columbia University's Bureau of Applied Social Research, the ersatz jurors, called from regular jury pools, were seated in a real New York courtroom (see "Do News Reports Bias Juries?" *CJR*, May/June 1976). After being given either neutral or prejudicial information about the defendant in an actual murder trial, they listened, on audio tape, to a reenactment of the trial. Their deliberations took place in actual jury rooms. Researchers Alice M. Padawer-Singer and Allen H. Barton found that the jurors who read the prejudicial material were more likely to find the defendant guilty. Trial lawyers were used to conduct a voir dire examination of just over half of the experimental juries. While this examination helped significantly in reducing the likelihood of a biased jury, it did not eliminate the problem, the researchers said.

Has such experimental evidence clearly established that pretrial publicity results in a biased jury? The answer must be no, because no clear cause-and-effect relationship has been established, and because the experimental research is a

*Don R. Pember, a professor of communications at the University of Washington in Seattle, is the author of, among other books, Mass Media Law.*



CJR David Suter



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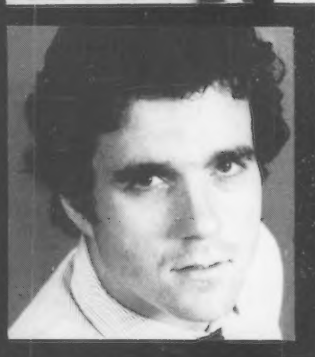
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## Commentary

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flawed mirror of what takes place in real life, in real jury trials.

For one thing, in every experiment cited by the Indiana researchers the test subjects knew that no human defendant's life or freedom depended upon their deliberations. For another, there was no robed judge (an important authority figure) to warn the ersatz jurors of the importance of making their decision solely on the basis of the evidence presented at the trial and to admonish them to ignore what they had previously heard or read about the case. This is an important factor. In the single jury study done in recent times with real jurors and real trials, the researcher — Harry Kalven of the University of Chicago — reported that, "We do . . . have evidence that jurors take with surprising seriousness the admonition [from the judge] not to read the paper or discuss the case with other people." The research cited by Kalven was part of a massive 1954 study in which actual jury deliberations were secretly tape-recorded and studied. (Revelation of these practices prompted rules that permanently foreclosed the use

of actual juries in such studies.)

Finally, there is the matter of the ersatz journalism provided to the ersatz jurors. News stories about the hypothetical defendants were obviously fabricated and presented in a totally artificial manner. Test subjects were handed the articles and told to read them. In real life, of course, we are bombarded by news each day. We may or may not read a story about a crime, and if it does catch our eye we may not read it closely or entirely. Our reading and viewing of stories about a specific crime take place in the context of reading and viewing stories about many other news events. Also, when a real juror has actually read stories about the case being tried, it is highly unlikely that he or she read them just prior to deciding the case. A trial — a real and often lengthy trial — intervenes. All of these elements of artificiality in the experimental setting seriously undercut the validity of the experimenters' findings.

Veteran courtroom observers frequently note that real-life juries do not operate like test subjects. William J.

Bauer, a judge of the Seventh United States Court of Appeals, told delegates to the 1976 American Society of Newspaper Editors convention that, in his experience, pretrial publicity was simply not a serious problem. In even highly publicized trials at which he had presided, Bauer reported, more than 90 percent of the prospective jurors could not remember reading about the case. The others, he said, vaguely remembered that they had read something about the case, but only one-half of 1 percent could remember specific details.

Some researchers have tried to determine how real-life potential jurors are affected by publicity about real trials. Registered voters were telephoned before an actual, widely publicized trial began and asked whether they believed the defendant was guilty. In a 1970 survey only 23 percent of nearly 200 persons interviewed by researcher Sam G. Riley before the murder trial of Captain Jeffrey MacDonald — a Green Beret Army doctor charged with killing his family, a crime that had been

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highly publicized in the three North Carolina cities covered by Riley's survey — said they thought the defendant was guilty. Twenty percent of the interviewees told Riley, a doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina, they had never heard of MacDonald.

A similar study was conducted in the Midwest prior to a highly publicized 1971 murder trial in Champaign, Illinois. Defense attorneys in the case argued that publicity about the two defendants was prejudicial, especially statements suggesting that prosecution eyewitnesses would testify that they had seen the defendants commit the murder. Researchers Rita Simon, of the University of Illinois, and Thomas Eimermann, of Illinois State, interviewed 100 persons who said they had heard about the crime. Seventy-five of them said they could remember details about the case. A majority of this group told the researchers they believed that the defendants should be prosecuted for the crime, but added that they believed the two men could get a fair trial in the community. Evidence presented at the trial, they

said, could convince them to change their minds about the guilt of the defendants. (One of the two defendants subsequently pleaded guilty; a jury found the second defendant innocent.)

There have been many cases in which defendants were acquitted in a jury trial despite massive prejudicial publicity. In *The Jury: Its Role in American Society*, researcher Rita Simon reminds us of Angela Davis and John Connally, both of whom were all but convicted in the press but were found innocent at trials. Similarly, before the first trial of Maurice Stans and John Mitchell for their part in the Watergate scandal, Simon notes, 84 percent of a sample of persons questioned in Washington, D.C., said they believed the pair were guilty. Yet both were acquitted at the trial.

**T**here is also a considerable body of research which, while it does not deal directly with the state of mind of jurors or prospective jurors, nevertheless raises further questions about the validity of experimental findings on the impact of pretrial pub-

licity. Social scientists who study advertising and other forms of mass communication are discovering that people frequently don't remember what they see on television or read in the newspaper — and that what they *do* remember is often remembered incorrectly. The advertising industry, for example, discovered in 1981 that more than 90 percent of persons questioned could not recall the product named in the last television commercial they had watched — and these were persons who said they were watching television when they were telephoned by the researchers. A 1980 study carried out by Jacob Jacoby, a Purdue University researcher, concluded that "in 83.2 percent of the 5,400 viewings, viewers miscomprehended at least some portion of the communications they saw." And two University of Maryland researchers, John Robinson and Mark Levy, recently found that a significant portion of the 1,000 persons they telephoned could not remember news stories that had received prominent play the week before the interview. Robinson and Levy concluded: "Our results make

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CJR-09

## AT ISSUE

it clear that journalists . . . cannot assume that just because a story has been afforded front-page or network-news treatment it has automatically made its way into public consciousness." In the real world, it appears, Americans consume the news in fits and starts, forgetting, misunderstanding, perhaps even ignoring important stories.

In summary, research bearing on the impact of pretrial publicity does not support the case for closing pretrial hearings. Pretrial publicity may be cruel or embarrassing or in bad taste, but it will not necessarily make it impossible or even difficult to find a jury of twelve citizens capable of deciding the case on the evidence presented in court. Does this mean that a defendant's right to a fair trial by an unbiased jury is never threatened by pretrial publicity? Certainly not. Sustained, massive publicity about a particular sensational crime may be read or viewed and remembered by many persons, especially if the crime occurs in a small town. But even in the worst case, there are likely to be significant numbers of people who will not know about the case, or who will remember little of what they have seen or heard. And in that rare instance when publicity has saturated a community, remedies such as change of venue, continuance, and bringing in jurors from another city or county exist to protect the defendant.

News organizations must be willing to supply their attorneys with the will and the means to challenge the basic assumptions upon which the closure of a hearing normally rests — namely, that there has been massive publicity about the case, that the members of the community have seen this publicity and are prejudiced against the defendant, and that it is doubtful that an impartial jury can be found. This will, of course, require reporters and editors to admit that not everyone in the community reads the paper or watches the news, and that often, because the material is poorly prepared or the audience is inattentive, people forget or fail to understand much of what they do read or view. Publishers and broadcasters may be reluctant to make such admissions, but judges need to hear the message. ■





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# COMMENT

## The indiscretions of Alastair Reid

Quiz: What American journalistic issue of the past summer attracted page-one coverage in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* on succeeding days, produced hot editorials in the *Times* and many other papers, won nearly a full page in *Newsweek* and two pages in *Time*, and stirred a flurry of comment and letters-to-the-editor for more than a month thereafter? A setback for the First Amendment? The dissolution of a major newspaper? A clash between the press and the White House?

No. In case you have already forgotten: in 1983, Alastair Reid, a writer and poet, had the bad luck or bad judgment to speak frankly at a Yale seminar about dodges, long common to the trades of foreign correspondent and magazine writer, that he had employed in reporting for *The New Yorker* magazine. In his articles, he admitted, he had freely quoted a hypothetical (and suspiciously articulate) taxi driver. Back in 1961, he had created a composite Spanish barroom patronized by Spaniards of a similarly composite persuasion, some of them asking questions that happened to be on Reid's mind. In 1982, he had written about a Spanish village situated nowhere in particular, peopled by characters who had only first names.

Reid not only had committed these transgressions and admitted them; he also defended them. When a former participant in the Yale seminar, who had gone on to become a *Wall Street Journal* reporter, set about to expose him, he responded, with a touch of hauteur, that recording facts was not all that important, that specifics about time and place might best be left to tourist magazines, and that indeed he found it completely proper to place his own relevant questions in the mouths of characters of his own making. Or words to that effect.

Somewhere between the cleaning up of quotes and the introduction of fictional characters masquerading as real people there is a line that contemporary readers have a right to expect that reporters will not cross. Reid seems to have strayed — or deliberately positioned himself at times — on the wrong side of that line. But this does not explain why the reaction was so blistering that even Reid's loyal editor, William Shawn, and some of his colleagues at *The New Yorker* were forced to distance themselves from the new pariah. Had there been a way for the journalistic community to excommunicate Reid, no doubt proceedings would have begun.

Indeed, the reaction was so fierce as to be labeled neurotic, as Christopher Hitchens suggested in the *London Times Literary Supplement*. Reid was treated as if he carried the plague — but there was disagreement about the precise nature and etiology of the disease.

Many commentators called the malady New Journalism. Some reached back more than a decade to associate Reid's Spaniards with *New York* magazine's fabled "Redpant," the composite prostitute. Then they moved to "Jimmy," Janet Cooke's made-up under-age heroin addict. Thence to numerous contemporary phenomena such as docudramas and shoddy books.

In fact, Reid's fabrications had little to do with New Journalism. Not only did his practices predate the New Journalism of the 1960s but his repertoire of artifice seemed less that of the New Journalist and more that of the jaded nineteenth-century litterateur-reporter, who customarily altered names, cities, and even countries to suit his own literary purposes.

Why journalists of the late twentieth century should find this so profoundly frightening is a puzzle. Is there, perhaps, somewhere, buried deep, a feeling among American journalists that unless each minor lapse is denounced and extirpated, the public is likely to conclude that *all* journalists are party to the fraud? Or that journalism itself is a fraud?

Exposing journalistic lapses is, of course, a legitimate journalistic task. But before the next round of stonemasonry, the various branches of journalism might well ask themselves whether their own conventions are entirely superior to the shortcuts adopted by Reid. In the newspaper, it is not a composite character but a tendentious voice out of nowhere in particular: "The disclosure that a longtime staff member at *The New Yorker* has long invented characters, rearranged events, and composed conversations in nonfiction articles, has refocused attention on the blurring of journalistic distinctions between fact and fiction" (*The New York Times*, June 20, 1984). Who is doing this refocusing? Could it be the reporter himself?

Or, in a newsmagazine, it is a crowd composite: "The roster of complaints against the press is diverse, even contradictory, but there is an instructive consistency to the questions that the public asks most often: Are reporters scrupulously accurate, or will they reshape a quote, ignore a fact, even concoct an anonymous 'source' in order to make a point? Are they fair and objective? Why are there so many leaks, and do reporters care about threats to national security? What value should reporters place on a person's right to privacy? What purpose is served by the preoccupation with 'investigative' reporting?" (*Time*, December 12, 1983). What public asked these questions? Who determined that these, not other questions, were most often asked? Is this public itself, perhaps, a concocted anonymous source?



It may have been foolhardy of Reid to admit — first in a seminar, then to a reporter who had gotten her lead from that seminar — to employing methods that are out of date and out of fashion. Even so, he could hardly have predicted that the press would react as if it had seen a ghost.

*In the interest of full disclosure, it should be noted that two of the Review's current editors — though not, as it happens, the author of the preceding editorial — have worked for The New Yorker. The editorial was written by James Boylan, CJR's founding editor.*

## Darts and laurels

**Dart:** to the *St. Petersburg Times*, for chauvinistic editing of a reprinted column by *New York Times* sportswriter Dave Anderson on the expansion of professional baseball. The *St. Petersburg* version: "Tampa and St. Petersburg each is attempting to enter the majors." The *New York* original: "Tampa and St. Petersburg each is attempting to finance a Florida stadium, although Tampa would appear to be the better location." (Four weeks after the abbreviated reprint appeared, the *St. Petersburg Times* published a statement acknowledging the deletion and attributing it to a junior copy editor acting on his own.)

**Dart:** to WOC-TV, the NBC affiliate in Davenport, Iowa, for officiating at an unholy union of self-promotion and news. As reported by the *Des Moines Sunday Register*, the station on May 15 and 16 devoted a total of more than six minutes to the wedding of Eugenia D'Ambrosio, its 6 P.M. co-anchor, including a historical tour of her native Savannah, a preview of the event, and taped segments of the ceremony, reported and photographed by WOC personnel.

Explained WOC news director Jack Thomsen (as quoted by the *Register*), "It's not every day that an established anchor in the market gets married."

**Laurel:** to Molly Ivins, columnist for *The Dallas Times Herald*, for a ripsnorting attack (July 4) on the Texas news media in general, and on the *Times Herald* in particular, for behaving shabbily when state legislators, responding to the press's urgings for much-needed major educational reform, proposed to pay for it with a sales tax on advertising. Ivins reported that, after a lot of crying and lobbying, a compromise was reached ("You know how much a politician likes to cast a vote that is going to tee off the publisher of the local paper?") that made the newspaper business look "like a pile of doggie-do": the new tax, on subscriptions, will come from the pockets of newspaper readers, leaving business revenues untouched.

**Dart:** to *The Washington Post*, for narcissistic news judgment in splashing across the top of page one on Sunday, May 27, the first installment of the *Post*'s eight-part syndicated serialization of assistant managing editor Bob Woodward's new biography of John Belushi. A note at the end of the excerpt directed readers to the Book World section and what turned out to be a most favorable lead review.

**Laurel:** to *CBS Morning News* and WCBS consumer editor Betsy Ashton, for an unsugarcoated report (July 2) on the "sweet deception" practiced by major food companies that capitalize on the public's well-founded concern about the high sugar content of breakfast cereals — and on its unfounded belief in the nutritional superiority of cereals sweetened with honey. Among the egregious examples cited by Ashton: three cereals made by Kellogg and General Foods, both of which are regular advertisers on CBS. (For

## Notes from the dartboard: the Ferraro test

While the rules of campaign etiquette for the two-gender ticket were settled by the principals with enviable dispatch, the rules of journalistic etiquette in this uncharted season are being written by the press day by day. In the meantime, our readers' candidates for Darts roll in. Was *U.S. News & World Report* guilty of subliminal sexism when it applied to the vice-presidential nominee the adjectives "trim" and "frosted blond"? No, of course not — but to some readers, at least, the latter phrase came uncomfortably close to the unforgivable noun. Did the *Tri-City Herald*, in the state of Washington, and other newspapers around the country, reinforce a double standard by printing an AP report on the campaign kick-off that mentioned Ferraro's black-and-white plaid frock? Technically, perhaps — until one recalls the startling scoop on network news that, for his San Francisco acceptance speech, Mondale would be wearing a gray worsted Ralph Lauren. Did the AP cross the line when it solicited opinions about Ferraro's coiffure from proprietors of celebrity salons? Probably — though the Darts and Laurels editor herself admits to musing how she might look

in a Gerry wedge; besides, the feature had the grace to include a rebuke to itself from the famous Kenneth, who impatiently told the reporter, "I think we've got to get past this stuff. . . . Why is it no one ever asks me about George Bush's hairstyle?"

Given the unprecedented challenge to the nation's news media, it seems to us, at the moment at least, that CJR Darts in this fruitful new category are most usefully aimed at professional breaches of a more serious kind. At the prurient cartoon by Danby in the *Providence Evening Bulletin*, for instance, which showed the waving campaign couple rejecting each other's sexual advances in sotto voce exchange; at the nudge-and-wink tagline on a *Peoria Journal Star* editorial underscoring the political wisdom of having the two nominees stump in opposite geographical directions: "Mrs. Mondale might not mind that either." In short, not so much at the thoughtless as at the tasteless and crude; not so much at the insensitive as at the downright mean. In any event, prudence alone suggests we husband our supply of Darts. It's only early August, after all.



contrast, consider *The Wall Street Journal*, which refused to accept a paid advertisement from Public Advocates of California asking for contributions in support of its lawsuit against General Foods for deceptively advertising such "breakfast candy" cereals as a wholesome part of a balanced diet for children.)

**Dart:** to the *Philadelphia Daily News* and columnist Pete Dexter, for *What Makes Sam Run*, 750 outraged words excoriating ABC's Sam Donaldson for the love of celebrity and lust for attention evidenced in "his" embarrassing request to Gary Hart that the presidential candidate do his "hilarious" imitation of Teddy Kennedy during a primary season interview — an interview that was, in fact, conducted by Roger Mudd. Dexter's column carried a photo of Donaldson and attacked him by name sixteen times.

**Laurel:** to *The Hartford Courant*, for an enterprising study (June 24) of Connecticut's expanded bridge inspection program a year after the disastrous collapse of the heavily traveled Mianus River bridge. Based on undercover surveillance of safety inspection teams over a sixty-five-day period, and buttressed with analyses of government records and interviews with transportation officials and private engineers, the report revealed the program to be marred by laxity, fraud, and an unsettling state of sag.

**Dart:** to the Scranton, Pennsylvania, *Scrantonian*, for a p.r.-flavored scoop on National Ice Cream Day that managed to mention Baskin-Robbins products seventeen times.

**Dart:** to *The Buffalo News*, for inattention to detail. A sympathetic interview with deputy county executive Michael P. McKeating, following his forced resignation in the midst of a heavily publicized fiscal crisis, took note of McKeating's background as a former journalist — but failed to mention that prior to his appointment to county government he had been business editor of the *News*.

**Laurel:** to *NBC Nightly News* and correspondent John Hart, for a joint investigation with the Better Government Association (June 26, 27) of the staggering rip-offs of the U.S. Navy in the 1970s by such major defense contractors as General Dynamics, Lockheed, and Litton Industries. The still-unpunished crimes, the series reported, defrauded taxpayers of tens of millions of dollars and set back the nation's military-preparedness program by years.

**Dart:** to *The Washington Post*, for laying on a 9,000-word banquet celebrating the glories of Safeway Stores, one of the paper's largest advertisers. The four-course series by Ward Sinclair (July 15, 16, 17, 19), which served up such page-one headlines as *SAFEMAY EMPIRE STRIKES BACK AT GIANT'S INNOVATIONS*, *SAFEMAY ADAPTS 'MOM AND POP' IDEAS TO MODERN NEEDS*, and *SAFEMAY ROUNDS UP OLD TASTES FOR ITS OWN BRAND*, was accompanied by a dozen separate side dishes of filler facts (e.g., about 40 percent of Safeway's customers use express-lane checkouts), and was decorated with photos of the Safeway president, the Safeway chief executive officer, a Safeway division manager, two Safeway store managers, a Safeway salad bar worker, three Safeway researchers, the Safeway logo, and a Safeway store.

## Other voices

### Theodore H. White on why he is resigning from the National Press Club

I have carried my membership card in the National Press Club with pride for almost twenty-five years, and few honors have come to me more meaningful than your Fourth Estate Award in December 1980.

Alas, at this point I submit to you my resignation from the Club.

I do so because of the Club's invitation to Louis Farrakhan to appear before it. I resign not only because Farrakhan is so violently anti-Semitic; nor because he recruits armed thugs as bodyguards, as did fascists in countries I reported abroad. I do so chiefly because he has threatened with death an honest and decent newsman, doing his responsible best to report accurately the most sensitive subject that divides our nation.

I cannot imagine how the National Press Club could offer its platform to Farrakhan's message of hate. He is entitled, as are we all — visionaries and rabblers alike — to free and open speech wherever he finds a hearing. And the Club certainly has a duty to invite men of state, virtuous or corrupt, chosen by their people, bearing the message of their constituencies, however horrid. That is history which we must report. But the invitation to Farrakhan is not history. To dignify so vicious a man as Farrakhan, chosen by no one, elected by no one, a boastful man threatening a newsman with death, is to confuse history with hype. To offer such a person our platform as his forum is to dishonor all those who have stood on that platform before.

I cannot go along. Under separate cover I am returning both my membership card and the plaque of honor you awarded me four years ago. I do this with enormous personal regret but I cannot do otherwise.

*A letter from Theodore H. White to John Fogarty, president of the National Press Club, August 1*

### Janet Malcolm on the rights of interviewees

A journalistic interview is not a laboratory experiment fixed for all time, but a social interaction. We all say things we are sorry we said or wish we had said differently. There is no law of journalism that says that when a writer is preparing a piece of reportage for publication as a book, he may not give the people he has quoted — if they ask for it — the chance to reformulate their words or retract the things they feel foolish about having said. The idea of journalism is not to catch people out, or to hold them to their words (they are not speaking under oath, after all), but to try to represent their thoughts and feelings accurately and fairly.

*From a letter by Janet Malcolm to The Village Voice, July 17*



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# The networks vs. the pols: Who won at San Francisco?

A noted historian reviews the fray

by GARRY WILLS

**T**o hear some Democrats tell it at their San Francisco convention, the struggle was not with Republicans but with the camera. The party came to celebrate, and the press to stir up trouble. The sponsors of the event wanted to make the camera a captive of the podium; but the camera, rebelling, kept trying to rove.

One side wanted to give us a "revue," *New Faces and Old Values*; the other wanted to "find the story." Both sides said they won, and thought they lost. The camera people threatened to cut back even further, four years from now, on their coverage of an event ABC's news executive Jeff Gralnick calls "a dinosaur." And some party people were

angry enough at facing cameras to agree with Illinois Congressman Dan Rostenkowski that interviewing delegates on the floor during roll-call votes should be forbidden at future conventions.

The logic of the party's scheduling was centripetal, the portrayal of unified Democrats through the dramatic unities, with the podium area as proscenium arch — Mario Cuomo

*Garry Wills is Henry R. Luce professor of American Culture and Public Policy at Northwestern University and the author, most recently, of Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment. Research assistance for this article was provided by CJR interns Jane Berryman and Pam Kennedy and by John Wills in San Francisco.*







**CNN's pundit John Connally:** "Cable News Network got its ham without having to search about for it on the floor."

even used the stagey device of lowering the houselights to hush an audience for his speech. He may remember that in Italian religious paintings bored spectators haunt the edges of miracle scenes, like sleeping soldiers at the Resurrection. But the camera gets nervous when all it can do during the long breaks for applause is show an unsmiling man sipping water; so ABC poked its lenses into the dark, with cetological curiosity, to find a white-haloed Senator Moynihan aglow in the shadowy waters of the New York delegation.

If party organizers think in terms of "legitimate" theater, the networks aspire toward cinema; they are centrifugal, trying to "open up" the bright-lit box of the stage, following characters out behind the scenes or onto the street. Since the cameras *could* do that, they *had* to do it, demonstrating their mobility. In the process, they illustrated one of Gary Hart's contentions about modern war, that the fancier the equipment, the greater the odds it will not work. So we got the normal incidence of earpieces falling out, questions repeated, cameras unable to find the person just introduced. Dan Rather said, "Morton Dean is at the . . . well, to be honest with you, I'm not sure . . ." Cable News Network began an interview with Willie Brown, Speaker of the California Assembly, while its cameras flitted around in panic trying to locate him. NBC found Virginia's governor, Charles Robb, just as he and the house were darkened for a filmed tribute to Harry Truman. Tom Brokaw described Jesse Jackson as standing on the convention floor when he had arrived behind the podium. Rather asked Lesley Stahl to ask a New York delegate if Jesse Jackson would now campaign against Mayor Koch, and she asked if Jackson would *run* against Koch. (Answer: "We have ample qualified black candidates in New York.") Then Stahl asked Rather if she had asked the right question, and he said no, would she ask . . .

The cameras cut away from politicians posing at the microphones to politicians primping on the floor. When Mon-

dale's worker, Bob Beckel, assured us that all was united in Mondale's party, Dan Rather described that as the kind of platitude one can expect "when you talk to campaign advisers at this stage of the campaign." Okay, but you made us talk to him. Cable News Network got its ham without having to search about for it on the floor. It hired, for comments, ex-politician John Connally, who flattered this "old friend" and that old hack. About the blacks who booed Andrew Young, Connally was judicious: "The truth of the matter is, they're human like anyone else." When Dr. Joseph Lowery of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference appeared in the anchor booth to discuss Jesse Jackson's speech, Connally told the man he was supposed to be questioning: "It sounds like you had a lot of input into the speech tonight."

The camera sometimes ranged far to find people intent on the very scene it had fled. Lem Tucker of CBS was photographed watching Jackson campaigners outside the area watching, on television (another station, obviously), the very thing we could not watch. Then back inside the hall, Lesley Stahl tried to ask a Brooklyn delegate for Jackson, Earlene Harris, how she felt, and the woman pointed to the podium: "He's expressing it for me right now."

This was during the introduction to Jackson's speech on Tuesday. Jackson had given up his demonstration-with-band period at the podium for an innovative introduction. Richard Hatcher brought forward a series of young members of the "rainbow coalition" — a Lebanese-American, a black man determined to be "the first blind governor of South Carolina," a Jewish woman, and others — to say what Jackson's candidacy had meant to them. The party was trying to introduce the new faces of its promising young governors at this convention — men like Kerrey of Nebraska and Clinton of Arkansas — but the camera would not linger even on these mini-stars. With Jackson's comparative nonentities, it was far more impatient. Dan Rather, looking from his row of sideshows back toward the main event, said: "This roll-up at the podium, a long string of speakers, a string about as long as a well rope it begins to feel, continues to build up."

**O**ne can sympathize with the controllers who switch from monitor to monitor in their booths, determining what goes on the air. They could not recognize a single face in Jackson's lineup. Their problem is much the same as that of a network executive deciding to air a situation comedy: it must use tested material. If people do not know what or whom they are seeing, how can they respond? When NBC at last ran out of excuses for avoiding the podium, and tuned in to one of Jackson's speakers, she was picked up during her conclusion. Her name, Linda Pedro, did not appear on the screen until she was speaking her final words. Only after she left did Tom Brokaw explain why she had come: "Any number of people have been able to speak on Jackson's behalf tonight. We've kind of lost track at this point about how many have appeared." It is easy to lose track when you never started keeping track.



The need for instant recognition, for big names, known faces, catchy phrases, comes from the fact that TV must be most niggardly with the thing it has most of — time. It is on all day, yet it cannot exploit the most important element in narrative — temporal continuity. Television resembles a miser who prefers money to food, and starves to death by selling his meal. The difficulty of the networks is not suggested by saying it is like having four movies play in the same theater (common enough now); it is like having them play in the same *room*. You must grab the viewer, insist, thrust in, or the neck turns, the knob is twirled. You cannot build up — that would be “building” Rather’s well rope of boredom. There is competition for attention minute by minute. A political convention is a sore trial for network nerves, since the major addresses must be broadcast without commercial interruption — which just leads to compensatory tachycardia when a speech is over and the cameras break free again.

I am not arguing, like Congressman Rostenkowski, for a relatively stationary camera at conventions. For one thing, delegates *want* to be seen and interviewed; they will never isolate themselves — even if they could. Rostenkowski’s plan, to have interviews only on the periphery of the con-

vention floor, would lead to enormous traffic jams at all points of access, with more delegates wanting out than in. Besides, no one in the hall watches everything going on at the podium; why should viewers at home? Beyond that, the networks are right to feel that “the story” is often outside the hall, in the candidates’ hotels, in caucus rooms, in the street.

#### **A private panic: the Manatt-Lance affair**

The story in San Francisco was offstage, but the cameras could not find it. Take the opening story of the week, one full of action, movement, and suspense. The characters were made for storytelling — a top dog stumbling, an underdog fighting back, a breezy bad guy trying to edge in, a plucky “no one” pushing him out. The story, in fact, was tailored for Alfred Hitchcock — with famous backdrops, a private panic smuggled through public places, foes pretending to be friends as they linked arms. Yet of this story Daniel Schorr could say on CNN: “Look, we were tossed a story on what was going to be a dull weekend. We don’t want to let our teeth out of this story, but, in fact, it’s a little boo-boo.” In fact, television never got its teeth *into* the story. Never scratched it.

**Monitors at work:** “*Their problem is much the same as that of a network deciding to air a situation comedy: it must use tested material.*”





Begin Friday night, at Ann Getty's party, where Charles Manatt had to appear, despite rumors that he was being fired as chairman of the party whose convention he had just brought to his native state. Like John Kennedy and his chief advisers during the missile crisis, Manatt would have to keep up his schedule for the next two days, to play down the very problem that engrossed him. At the Friday party, some journalists touched delicately on the subject, inhibited by their status as guests. CBS executive Don Hewitt had Diane Sawyer do the questioning, then call the network in time to make CBS radio newscasts. Sander Vanocur of ABC told me: "Hal Bruno was lucky enough not to be invited to stay for dinner, so he could get the story out in time to appear on *Nightline*." (Apparently it was unthinkable that a reporter would pretermite the meal for the story.)

While, at the party, Manatt was being prodded by newspeople, he found out from them that *The Atlanta Constitution* — Lance's loyal hometown newspaper, which dropped William Safire's column after its attacks on Lance during the Carter administration — would print in the morning that Lance was slated to be the new party chairman. This panicked Manatt, who had earlier asked his California friend, Congressman Tony Coelho, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, to intercede for him — with good results: Mondale's people had said his status was still to be settled, and agreed to a Saturday meeting with Coelho. Manatt put through a call from the Getty mansion to Coelho, who was at a fundraiser in Mariposa. Was the Saturday meeting still on? Coelho checked: meeting still on, for Saturday at 11:00; Manatt's status still to be decided. Coelho then took a chartered flight to San Francisco, and went to Manatt's room after 2 A.M. to plan the underdog's return.

Saturday morning Bob Beckel made a further mush of things for the Mondale people at a press conference where he partly withdrew Lance, partly restored Manatt, while pretending that nothing much was going on. Reaction to

Lance was the newsworthy item through most of the day — astonishment that Mondale, who had been warned against Jimmy Carter as something of old baggage and an albatross for him, had managed to find and embrace Carter's own former albatross — the baggage's baggage, Bert Lance.

The Coelho mission was still a secret. He had met Saturday morning with Mondale forces at their hotel, the Meridien, for two and a half hours, getting bargaining room and a broker's role. Now, early in the afternoon, he

needed Manatt — who was off at another party, at a vineyard in the Napa Valley. Manatt took a helicopter to San Francisco's Pier 44, where Coelho was waiting for him in a limousine. The driver and three Coelho aides walked about the pier while Manatt and Coelho talked alone. Manatt agreed, here, to serve in some diminished but real capacity, not to go off in anger. So Coelho returned to Mondale's people at the Meridien, where two alternatives were negotiated: Manatt still chairman of DNC but with reduced powers, or a new campaign post specially created for him.



all: CJR/Harvey Wang



To give Manatt the alternatives, Coelho tracked him to a third party, again in the Getty mansion, where they huddled in a small sitting room by the front door. Manatt still needed better assurances from the Mondale camp. For that, campaign manager James Johnson must be brought to San Francisco from Mondale's staging area at Lake Tahoe. Mike Steed, a Manatt emissary, reached Coelho near midnight at a North Beach restaurant. They walked down the street to confer, discussing the next day's meeting with Johnson. Coelho, in return, sent word around to Manatt's people to "stop fanning the flames." This continued through Sunday's pre-dawn hours.

Johnson met first with Coelho, then with Lance, who was waiting in Manatt's own suite. Beckel had not yet arrived — he was meeting *his* prior schedule. Another negotiator could not be tracked down for hours — he had gone to the softball game, Washington Square Bar and Grill against Tom Brokaw's media team. After all the relevant bargainers had agreed to the typed statement, they went out to face the press, then went off to the party at Gump's.

Coelho appeared in the lineup of people at the press conference, but his was the comparatively unknown face. Lance and Manatt were instantly scheduled to appear on the network morning news, where both declared, of course, that the flap was over. Of the three networks, NBC alone ran some remarks by Coelho — two sentences on its morning show. The first told why he had stepped into the affair originally: "Well, any time that you have indecision, it's damage." The second sentence, out of context, was obscure if not misleading: "And we decided, after this [Sunday] meeting, that Mondale would select Manatt."





Coelho's other appearance was on *The MacNeill/Lehrer NewsHour*. Correspondent Judy Woodruff introduced him with an entirely misleading chronology of events: "Coelho was part of a marathon set of negotiations between the Mondale campaign, Lance, and Manatt. It started early Sunday morning in Coelho's San Francisco hotel suite." It had started Friday morning, with Manatt's first call to Coelho; had traveled through hotel suites, mansions, parties, a city pier and sidewalk, and ended up in Coelho's suite. After Woodruff's introduction, Coelho told how simple it had been: "The basic thing that had to be resolved, did Mondale himself have a problem with Chuck Manatt? Mondale did not. Could we then put something together that made sense? Do you want Manatt involved in the campaign? Yes. Do you want him involved in a visible, structured, functioning role? Yes. So let's figure out what that is." Move the cameras on to the pundits, to discuss what damage had been done by Manatt's brief spin in the wash-and-dry of those days.

**T**he Lance-Manatt affair is a good study of the way television flattens time. By the stage of the story when cameras caught up with them, Lance and Manatt were ostentatiously united. Not only did we see the end of the tale before we saw much of anything else; we saw only a moment or two in most clips, and then saw the same clips repeated in news bulletins. Even with "moving-picture cameras," one is given a frozen moment, outside time. The networks had found and photographed the principals, and that is their visual "story."

**'The sponsors of the event wanted to make the camera a captive of the podium; but the camera, rebelling, kept trying to rove'**

Monday night at the convention, catching up on the Lance story meant asking Democrats on the floor what they thought about it. Most people predictably said it had not hurt their party — Mayor Cisneros of San Antonio spoke for many when he told NBC's Connie Chung it would be a small "blip on the radar scope." The few who said it was disturbing — like California assemblyman Willie Brown, speaking on CNN — were those threatening, for their own reasons, to back someone other than Mondale.

So "the story" was not *telling* the story but discussing whether the (untold) story was important or not. Just relating the facts, fascinating in themselves, was not something television could do, since cameras were not allowed in the limousine on Pier 44 — even Coelho's aides had to get out. But with all the expensive equipment moving around San Francisco to photograph anything that might turn up, no one apparently thought to piece together the prior sequence of events in a visual way. Why bother? There would have been no time to air such a complex tale. All the vaunted mobility of all those cameras cannot break the commercial gridlock back in the studio.

Admittedly, even the print media did not do very well in tracing the events of the weekend. The meeting on Sunday broke up so late that the press conference, at five o'clock, left little time to write for eastern papers' deadlines. *Time* and *Newsweek* were closing. The famous reporters were on their round of parties, just like the principals in the affair, and they crossed each others' paths to little purpose. The earliest full account of the weekend's negotiations came from a twenty-seven-year-old reporter for the *San Francisco Examiner* who had been at the paper for only three weeks. Mike Robinson had been assigned to do a "day-in-the-life" feature on Charles Manatt that Sunday. He had made arrangements and confirmed them earlier in the week; then, Saturday, he read that his subject had been fired, and thought the feature was dead. His editor, Steve Cook, said it was now a news story, follow Manatt as closely as he could — which, all Sunday, Robinson did: into elevators, men's rooms, trailing him by cab, jumping into a car with his bodyguard, getting in a word here, a word there.

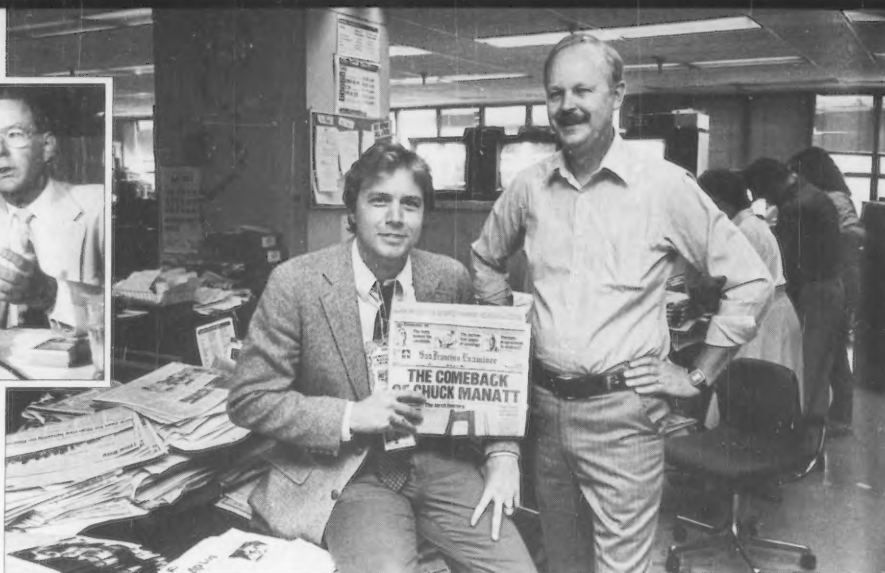
"After the party at Gump's, I went back to the paper. I was tired, but Steve sent me back to get more." He trailed Manatt until eleven, trying to learn more about the meetings that preceded the afternoon press conference. Manatt told







**Chummy trio, dogged duo:** Bert Lance and Charles Manatt flank Mondale's campaign manager James Johnson (inset). Shown right are Mike Robinson and Steve Cook of the San Francisco Examiner, which broke the inside story of Charles Manatt's ordeal.



CJR/Harvey Wang

him to call Coelho; so, back at the paper, still writing his day-in-the-life, Robinson left word at Coelho's hotel that Manatt had suggested he call. When Coelho came in from that night's parties at 1 A.M., he called and ran through the whole negotiation's chronology. "Well," says Robinson, "that shot the day-in-the-life." Robinson wrote the story of the chase from Mariposa to the Napa Valley to Pier 44, finishing his work at 4 A.M., in time for the first edition.

Some of the same details would be in Richard E. Cohen's article for the special *National Journal* distributed later that day, and other papers would catch up on Tuesday. But for the Monday *Examiner* it took energy and persistence on the part of both reporter and editor to publish a story that threaded its way through the heaviest concentration of communication expertise and equipment in America, yet went almost unreported on television. Like Woodward and Bernstein before they became celebrities, Robinson was not too important to ask, push in, go where the cameras could not, dog a person for humbling hours, mainly waiting.

### The 'intrusiveness' charge

No count was more often brought against television, in San Francisco, than its "intrusiveness." But famous journalists were very polite as they poked around the edges of the Lance affair while it was going on. What was normally resented as intrusiveness was the scramble of celebrity interviewers to be the first to ask celebrity politicians, in their moment of most demand, what they were about to say on the podium or what they had just said at the podium.

In this game of "journalistic enterprise," NBC is supposed to have scooped the other networks. Its reporters got there first, more insistently. It was a mini-disgrace for CBS to switch to Lesley Stahl when she signaled she "had" Joan Mondale on the floor, only to see her wedged off from her prey; or for Sander Vanocur to summon attention and then fail to reach Governor Cuomo just before he began his address. Cordoned off, Vanocur said he was being consigned to the Gulag Archipelago, and was reassured from

the anchor booth that there is a tradition of reporters being escorted from the hall — as if freedom of speech were somehow being denied if *this* network did not get the same famous face to say the same fatuous words several seconds before *that* network did. The format of such "interviews" both proclaims Significance and precludes it. The amour propre of the network and the interviewer is at stake — one face is apparently not famous enough to command the attention of another famous face in the crucial moment of public gaze. This gamesmanship is petty but entertaining, and it creates an air of factitious excitement when other interests flag. As show business, it is a routine that is wearing thin but still works, so why knock it? It just has nothing to do with journalism.

**T**he one serious charge of intrusiveness was actually an example of good journalism, yet the CBS press monitor, Ron Powers, felt obliged to disown it. I am referring to the Ed Bradley interview with Chicago's mayor, Harold Washington — for which we need some background. The networks, as I said, rightly think the story is not confined just to the convention center (though their schedules are fixed to correspond, roughly, with events occurring there). In each delegation there are factions, jockeyings, different careers and issues riding on the outcome of votes formally limited to matters of the national platform or candidates. There are proponents and opponents of various causes who use the format of the convention to advance their claims upon the party. For all the scorn over unread platforms that people run from rather than on, politics is people, and much of what the platform jockeying is all about is: "Can my people work with your people?" Not all of the lobbyists for the "Hart" plank against military involvement in Central America were interested in Hart's candidacy. Some were making contact with the Mondale foreign policy team, to influence it; others were trying to prevent that. When rumors of defection,



"movement," or bargaining were reported on the floor of the Moscone Center, it was easy to think of all this as make-believe drama, since the big revolts did not occur. But they did not occur because Mondale's forces worked to prevent their occurring, and those forces were affected in the process. It is quite true that the outcome of a modern national convention is predictable, and looks preordained. Still, the conclusion of sexual congress is also supposed to be fairly standard; but how you get there matters.

The problem with reduced coverage by the networks this year is not that we missed more of the formal proceedings "gavel to gavel," but that there was no time at night to catch up on things that took place during the day. The role of the women's caucus in the compromise over quotas, the wooing of Hispanics, the bitterness between certain factions, were important elements in the convention rarely reflected from interviews on the floor.

One of these stories, little reported, was of Mayor Harold Washington — who holds a job once central to Democratic conventions — coming to San Francisco with thirty-five delegates pledged to him as a favorite son. Washington arrived with speeches written to be delivered, and found no way to get onto the podium; he sponsored late and ineffectual moves to introduce a new plank (as the Hart forces successfully did) and to be entered in nomination. He angered his own state's Jackson forces, who thought he had agreed not to dangle his delegates before Mondale, and he let his Illinois enemies, led by Chicago alderman Ed Vrdolyak, baffle his approaches to Mondale. This was in one way a typical story of division within delegations, and in another way a very pungent individual item about one man's powerlessness in an old seat of power.

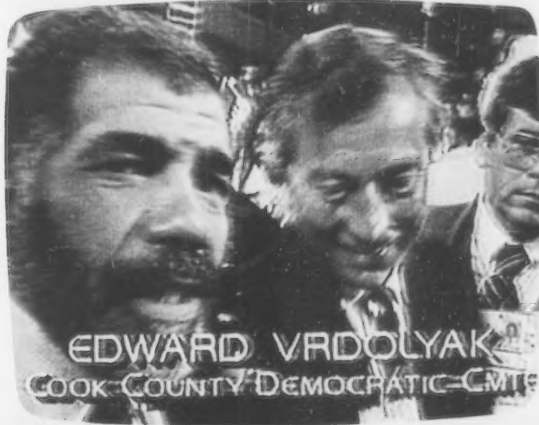
Ed Bradley, under the rubric of discussing divisions on the floor of the convention, asked Mayor Washington if he thought the party could be unified, and Washington said: "I wouldn't waste my time if I didn't think that that was desirable." Bradley then asked the mayor if he could work with others in his delegation for this unity, and Washington answered: "If the gentleman to whom you refer has an

interest as deep as mine, and if he has a constituency like mine, we will come out and vote for a Democratic candidate. It is up to him to match what I can do, but I don't think he can." Bradley said, "Well, let's ask him," and pulled Vrdolyak toward the camera.

Washington, who refuses on his home ground to appear with Vrdolyak, pulled away, angry. Bradley persisted: "Can the two of you work together?" Washington ordered: "Turn that camera off a minute. . . . And don't ever do that again." Chicago journalists know that Washington will not appear with Vrdolyak, debate him, discuss things in public, though Vrdolyak controls the majority of the city council that has frustrated Washington at home, as he was frustrated at the convention. These journalists do not agree with that policy, but they have to observe it to maintain access to the mayor of their city. Earlier this year Washington had criticized another black journalist, Max Robinson, when he became a Chicago anchorperson and interviewed the mayor while Vrdolyak was on another camera. But when you are dealing with two men in the same delegation of the same party, at the same moment, on the same small patch of floor, all being watched by many cameras, why should one of them declare that bringing a fellow Democrat over to him is — in Washington's words on camera — the act of "one of the lowest possible individuals I've seen" and "an insult to common sense"?

The next day, CBS in effect apologized to the mayor, who had insulted its reporter so ferociously — on two grounds, for becoming a participant and for drawing a conclusion. But Bradley asked questions about unity, in a room where unity was being professed on all sides, of people who were clearly working against each other at the convention and elsewhere. Similar infighting occurred in other delegations, and should have been found and reported. In the upside-down world of network public relations, the one case of real probing behind the facade of public celebration became a matter to repent. And what conclusions did Bradley draw that, in Powers's words, "may or may not have been sustained by the facts"? He said: "I think what we have

**Floor fight:** "The one serious charge of intrusiveness" — involving Ed Bradley's interview encounter with Mayor Washington — "was actually an example of good journalism, yet the CBS press monitor, Ron Powers, felt obliged to disown it."





here is an . . . is an example of the kind of problem that the ticket faces. We have two Democrats that can't work together." The facts *certainly* bore out that "conclusion," which was not a conclusion so much as a statement of the obvious.

### Black caucus: the unreported story

Reporters were concluding all over the place on the floor of this convention, in some of their best work — as when Roger Mudd relayed the conclusion that Lance had advanced Jimmy Carter in the speaking schedule over the reluctance of some Mondale aides. If Powers wanted to see a CBS reporter become "a participant instead of simply a reporter," he had only to look at Diane Sawyer on Wednesday night, when she began an "interview" with three black Jackson delegates by saying "I can't believe" that blacks would boo Andrew Young, who "used to walk with Martin Luther King." The delegates answered that Young had no

status to prevent their disagreement with him. Sawyer, still incredulous, demanded: "But are you saying that a black man doesn't have the [same] right as anybody else to take an individual position?" She was clearly *arguing* that it is wrong to boo a man who walked with Martin Luther King — which may or may not be true, but is hardly "reporting" the view of those delegates.

The booing of Young at the podium on Tuesday night was a good example of a story that was picked up in mid-career — though the booing served as a beginning for later discussion, where it seemed an inexplicable affront to one man's dignity. (Whites boo whites all the time at conventions, though Tom Brokaw called the Young incident "some of the worst booing that we've seen at a convention in, what, twenty years or so, when [Nelson] Rockefeller appeared before the Republicans in 1964 in this same city." He did not remember the heavy booing at the Democratic convention in Chicago in 1968.)

The television coverage had suggested that Jesse Jackson is a kind of lone loose cannon for the Democrats, causing friction with the Jews out of some personal perversity. Dan Rather opined that Mondale should have "told off" Jackson the way "Ronald Reagan told George Bush off" in the 1980 campaign. Then he said to Bill Moyers: "I cannot understand why Jesse Jackson has not denounced Farrakhan." Moyers equaled him in puzzlement: "I don't understand it either." A *Los Angeles Times* poll of black delegates in San Francisco should have enlightened them — a majority of them (47 percent to 38 percent) still had a favorable opinion of Farrakhan even after Jackson had criticized his views. What is forgotten is that Jackson is not simply an individual responding to his own imperious mood. He speaks for many black delegates for whom the old civil rights generation is outmoded. The continuing tension between these forces was not *underreported* but *unreported* on television. It did not center around Young alone. Feelings ran so high in the Maryland delegation that a black Mondale delegate, Barbara Johnson, had to be taken from the floor to recover from the pressure brought to bear on her. After Jackson's speech, all the commentary stressed that he had placated some by his conciliatory tone. There was little to indicate that he had upset younger delegates who felt he had "given in" for nothing.

These were the delegates who, still unhappy on the day after Jackson's speech, booed Coretta Scott King, who had done more than "walk with Martin Luther King." Again, time was flattened in the brief clips we saw of that exhausting caucus (it went on for hours, delaying lunch as nerves were frayed). We saw Mrs. King put hand to heart and say, "My heart is heavy," with tears; then saw Jackson say, with tears, "She has the right to be heard."

What was missing was the one thing that made the drama occur at all, the play of time against expectations, the desire to speak, and a building frustration. On Wednesday the caucus was waiting to hear from Mondale and Jackson. There were divided feelings about the Young incident, bitter words on both sides. Mickey Leland, the congressman from Texas who supported Mondale but also voted for Jackson's planks, was trying to play peacemaker at the microphone,



both: CJI/Harvey Wang





**Mrs. King at the black caucus:** "What was reported was the set of demands on the party that blacks should make, not the mood Jesse Jackson had to assuage by producing those demands."

filling in time, when — simply because he had run out of other things to do — he asked Mrs. King to rise and say a few words. "Oh, no," said an Oregon delegate behind me. He could see the trouble coming.

It was an ill-considered moment, but Mrs. King could have brought unity back among the delegates if she stressed their common heritage (as Jackson would do after the crowd had become more resisting). Instead, responding to her genuine grief for a friend, she criticized those who had booed Young the day before. Booed herself, she paused over tears; those on the platform clustered about and embraced her; the crowd rose and applauded. It was a healing instant; the delegate behind me said, "Get her off, while it lasts!" Instead, she fought for control over herself and launched another attack on the booers, bringing up the generational claims that are a sore point with younger politicians (these were party *delegates*, after all, not Panthers in the street): "Over twenty-nine years I have been in the human rights struggle, and I think my record speaks for itself." A heckler called: "What about today?" She demanded an apology to Young. "Oh, no!" said the Oregon delegate, and serious booing began. Richard Hatcher, Jackson's spokesman on the platform, tried to restore the feelings of the moment when he had hugged her: "If you feel like hating someone, hate me. . . . We don't have too many leaders. We need all the leaders we can get." Another heckler: "Some of 'em we *don't* need."

It was into this hotel ballroom that Mondale came, to be greeted with cries of "Jesse!" Young came to its edges, and left after being called an Uncle Tom to his face. Jackson did not arrive, on his busy rounds of the day, till 1 P.M.; but he had been briefed on what happened. In an extraordinary display of impromptu eloquence, he prayed, argued, pleaded, and laughed the room into unity again, then called Mrs. King up, after forty minutes, and held her hand during the closing song. His talk was only ten minutes shorter than the televised speech of the night before, and far more mov-

ing. Where Hatcher had failed, he succeeded, but only at the full stretch of his skills. And what was reported from this meeting was, mainly, the set of demands on the party that blacks should make, not the mood Jackson had to assuage by producing those demands.

### Showpieces, quips, and the struggle for dignity

The Powers criticism of Bradley rests on a durable journalistic myth, that there is a platonically untainted event out there that must be conveyed by transparent reporting that does not alter its subject. But journalism is a transaction to which there are many immediate parties — the public, inhibiting what can be said; technology, establishing the way it can be said; the subjects, addressing and manipulating their fellows, the public, and the journalists; the journalists, reacting to all these pressures and to their own strengths and weaknesses. This is true of journalism in general, but a thousand times truer of a televised formal event like a convention, which occurs mainly *in order to be televised*, and whose political maneuverings toward the camera are at least as manipulative as the maneuverings of the networks to get people in front of the cameras. "Coverage" of conventions is largely a ceremonial affair, alternating the reverent and the entertaining, often in discordant ways. The speeches were good, but were intensely overpraised by television commentators, in part because they were showpieces of the networks as well as of the party. If they were no good, why did the networks waste so much time showing them? Edward Kennedy was superb, but in a supporting role. Cuomo and Jackson did well, Hart and Ferraro not so well, and Mondale poorly. But they all benefited by grade inflation on the commentators' part. The "anchors" were as enthusiastic in their praise as any Democrats interviewed.

The entertainment angle encourages quips best left unspoken. David Brinkley, who is credited with beginning this tradition of the droll, marked the historic nature of Jackson's speech by saying: "Just twenty-odd years ago, Jesse Jackson was leading demonstrations demanding the right to eat at Woolworth's lunch counter, which never was much of a demand, in my opinion." Brokaw competed by speaking of the Ferraro-Zaccaro family, as it waved from the podium: ". . . a lot of syllables in those two names." Some were accidentally dismissive, as when CNN's Tranette Ledford said of Jackson, in a pretaped segment: "In debates he often outshined the other candidates." At his shoe box?

Both sides lost; did the public win? Largely, yes. What can television tell us? Television truths. It can convey the sense of color, movement, and feeling in the hall, when there is any (and sometimes when there is not). It can celebrate. It can entertain. The result was more a festive rite than considered debate; but so are elections. The competition between the podium and the cameras is healthy, a tension between dull order and kaleidoscopic impressionism. "The story" did not get told on television. It never will. The struggle for dignity on all sides is part of the fun; its failure is a greater part; but the failure must not be so pronounced that the struggle makes no sense. The struggle made sense in San Francisco. The coverage, of course, was terrible. I loved it. ■



# POLAND'S PRESS- AFTER THE CRACKDOWN

by JANE LEFTWICH CURRY

**W**hen Poland's rulers imposed martial law on December 13, 1981, the unprecedented and exhilarating freedom of the past eighteen months came to an abrupt end. Hundreds of publications were shut down. In the days that followed, no journalist in Poland could avoid making a difficult choice. Should he continue in his present position or, perhaps, take the place of a higher-placed colleague who could no longer support the regime? Should he leave the profession in which he had worked all his life? Should he risk going underground and use his journalistic skills to fight the regime?

For a handful of Poland's once most-respected journalists, the crises of leadership in the government that followed the successes of Solidarity had provided an opportunity to join the country's governing circles. Thus, Jerzy Urban and Wieslaw Gornicki, formerly outspoken critics of the government, became press spokesmen for the Jaruzelski regime, while Mieczyslaw Rakowski, who had been editor-in-chief of *Polityka*, one of the most liberal and also most heavily censored papers in Poland in the seventies (the other being the bastion of Catholic humanism, *Tygodnik Powszechny*), became the deputy prime minister in charge of negotiating

with the labor movement. They quickly found themselves boycotted by former friends and colleagues.

Urban, Gornicki, and Rakowski justify their decision as having been the best of a limited number of painful alternatives. They blame their own isolation, as well as the failure of the Jaruzelski regime to gain wider support, on the stubbornness of their former colleagues and readers. Ironically, although they themselves once stood against censorship and political pressure, all three were party to the banning of the Association of Polish Journalists in March 1982 and to the revisions of the censorship law that transformed it from the much-sought-after protection of the freedoms that Solidarity had demanded to a means of shielding the regime against criticism. They have done this even as they have presented themselves as leaders of the profession by publishing collections of their writings from the sixties and seventies. Wieslaw Gornicki went so far as to insist that his book include and indicate the passages that were deleted by the censors in the seventies. For him, this was a mark of pride.

Thousands of other journalists have stayed on in their jobs and bent to the new demands and restrictions. For none was the choice simple. They had to go before review boards of army and police officers, party bureaucrats, and editors to be "verified" as acceptable journalists who recognized the errors of Solidarity. Some believed they had no other option financially; others were simply not prepared to leave

*Jane Leftwich Curry, who teaches political science at Manhattanville College in Purchase, New York, is the editor and translator of, among other works, The Black Book of Polish Censorship.*



**Three who chose power:** Mieczyslaw Rakowski (above), Wieslaw Gornicki (standing beside General Jaruzelski), and Jerzy Urban (far right) were once respected journalists. Urban and Gornicki are now press spokesmen for the regime; Rakowski is a deputy prime minister.



Independent Polish Agency



their profession. In either case, the two and a half years since martial law was declared have not been easy for them:

□ Dawid F\* stayed at *Polityka*, where he had long been a columnist. He and the ten out of twenty staff members who stayed on are occasionally able to write more cynically than they could five years ago. But Dawid's cynicism no longer wins him praise from Poland's intellectuals. Instead, it is generally regarded as a clever ploy intended to convey a sense of independence.

□ Jacek Z, thirty, has a good position on one of Poland's oldest weeklies, a position he never could have attained at his age if many of his elders had not abandoned their jobs. He has not published an article in a year because he cannot hit on anything to write about that would satisfy him and also get by the censors. As a result, his earnings are less than half of what they would be if he turned out articles regularly. He hopes that, if he plays his cards carefully, the government will allow him to study abroad or, failing that, that he will finally come across some safe topic — too arcane to vex the censors, too dull to interest readers — on which he can publish several articles. When his young wife drank too much at a party last year, she admitted feeling guilty at having urged him to stay in his profession and "sell out." They had no savings and two small children. "What could we have done?" she asked over and over again of anyone who would listen. Now, unless the amnesty of political prisoners confers some legitimacy on the government and its press, Jacek will have to give up his hope of being respected as a journalist; meanwhile, he has lost contacts that would have helped him find some other work.

□ Andrzej Nalecz-Jawecki was young enough to have some hope even after martial law. Nalecz-Jawecki helped to

found, and now edits, a new consumers' magazine, *VETO*, which recently took Polish milk producers to court for selling spoiled milk. For him and some of the other young editors and journalists, journalism still seemed to offer a chance to make small changes in the system, to make life more livable, and to maintain the respect of their readers. For most, such hopes have proved illusory, because the censors have become increasingly intransigent. *VETO* is one of the few journals of its kind that has not been closed down "for financial reasons," as was Polish radio's highbrow Channel 2 in July 1983, or placed under a hard-line editor drawn from the military or from the bureaucracy.

□ Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a former editor of *Tygodnik Solidarnosc* and an adviser to Solidarity who returned from interment to assume the editorship of *Wież*, one of Poland's Catholic intellectual journals, is one of only a handful of

## BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

journalists holding aboveground jobs who has not had to face criticism for failing to stand up to the regime. By maintaining the independent Catholic humanist tradition that the monthly has upheld since 1956, Mazowiecki and his colleagues at *Wież* serve as symbolic reminders that Poland's rulers are obliged to tolerate at least some independent writing in order to placate the Church and to give the appearance of being tolerant.

For many, the option of continuing in their profession no longer existed. About sixty full-time working journalists were held in interment camps in the months after the declaration of martial law; only a handful have been allowed to write again. Others, including most of the leaders of the Warsaw branch of the national journalists' association, avoided this fate only by hiding from the police until the search for them was dropped.

According to the executive director of the now-disbanded Association of Polish Journalists, some 2,100 journalists were either fired or told they had to retire or resign. A number, too, lost their jobs when their programs or their journals were closed down. Others simply refused to subject themselves to "verification." Many resigned of their own volition, unwilling to contribute their names and their reputations to sanctify what they regard as an illegal and intolerably repressive regime:

□ Witold X, a former managing editor of one of Poland's most prestigious intellectual weeklies, became Warsaw's most renowned taxi driver. He meets often with old colleagues and other former journalists who now sell vegetables or books or work at handicrafts industries.

□ Malgorzata Z, a former leading economic reporter and delegate to the 1981 Party Congress from one of Poland's major cities, now sells ice cream at a zoo.

□ Dariusz Fikus, the former executive director of the Polish journalists' association and managing editor of Rakowski's highly regarded paper, *Polityka*, for some twenty years, edits the monthly journal of the Blind Artisans' Association. Others who, like Fikus, found it too difficult to abandon journalism altogether edit professional periodicals, religious

\* For those who have not made their private acts of defiance a matter of public record, pseudonyms have been used to protect them from possible penalties for criticizing the Polish state.







**One who stood up:** Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a *Solidarity* editor and activist who was interned, now edits a Catholic periodical. Few of the nearly 60 full-time journalists who were interned have been allowed to hold posts with above-ground publications.

monthlies like the Jesuits' *Obstinance and Christ* (banned for nearly 100 years from publication in Poland and brought back when the Church, in effect, agreed to accept martial law in exchange for increased privileges, such as permission to publish more periodicals), and equally obscure new monthlies for private entrepreneurs and foreign businesses. These journalists hope they can continue to tell the truth in a veiled manner while providing at least marginal incomes for themselves and their friends. At the same time, they are playing a waiting game — for their journal to be shut down or taken away from them because they themselves or their writings are too controversial, for the inevitable delays and objections to their planned issues, or for the situation to change so that they can write as they did before.

□ For a few fluent in other languages, the solution was to take jobs as stringers and aides for foreign correspondents. As such, they continue to report and to maintain contacts with sources on both sides of the fence. But they also lose their Polish audiences.

□ Some people who retired from the profession and are able to survive on pensions serve the journalism community by organizing the distribution of aid to those without work and by seeing to it that information gets passed from one to another and into the underground media.

□ Still others write columns on car repair or medical problems. By night, they turn into underground publishers and writers, using pseudonyms, so that they can both survive and maintain their self-respect.

□ Many *Solidarity* activist-journalists and some journalists who found themselves abroad when martial law was declared or who could get grants to go abroad — among them almost half of the editorial board of the *Solidarity* weekly and many of the leaders of the radio and television branch of *Solidarity* — simply gave up hope and emigrated. Some, like Miroslaw Chojecki, the former head of an underground publishing house, have set up publications to keep the *Solidarity* movement alive in émigré communities and in Poland itself.

Meanwhile, in Poland, the underground media, whose operations were temporarily curtailed by martial law, are flourishing. Some 700 publications, ranging from weekly news reports put out in small factories to semiannual literary

and political journals, come out regularly. The largest of these in circulation, *Tygodnik Mazowsze* (the Warsaw-based weekly that appears as the voice of much of the underground leadership) and *Tygodnik Wojenny* (which is nationally circulated) have press runs of 30,000 copies, which are passed on through a complex distribution hierarchy of drop-points and couriers. Two news services developed in the heyday of *Solidarity* continue to provide Poles and foreigners with reports on illegal acts by the regime and popular resistance to it, as well as on discussions within the underground. Since December 13, 1981, some fifteen broadcasts have been made from underground radio transmitters. The broadcasts are primarily symbolic acts of defiance, since assiduous monitoring enables the government to drown out the broadcasters with pop music within three minutes of the time they go on the air. Because of this, the underground has turned to a new medium: cassette tape recordings that are privately distributed and re-recorded as they are passed around.

For Poland's rulers, all of this means that even those who work for them are not theirs. Nor can the government easily lure back those who refused to collaborate. In the year and a half before martial law was lifted and Poland declared "normalized," in July 1983, virtually every editor and journalist who had been forced out of the profession was invited to take a visible position on some prominent if no longer respected publication or radio or television program. The response was almost universally refusal.

**A**fter disbanding the contentious and highly politicized Association of Polish Journalists, the government organized a new association with new leaders. Membership in that association meant the possibility of getting discounts on, and preferential access to, cars and housing, as well as vacations in a special journalists' spa in Bulgaria. Only about 5,000 journalists — counting many with weak credentials — were drawn by these benefits. (The old association had more than 10,000 members and its strict rules requiring three years of full-time work for membership barred casual journalists and government bureaucrats.)

Readers have been no easier to entice. In the early days of martial law, much of the public boycotted the press, leaving newsstands piled high with the few government-approved periodicals, and, in some communities, turning television sets toward the street while families went on walks during the evening news. This they did to signal their opposition to the repression and to support journalists who refused to condone martial law. The habit of reading the establishment press has not returned. So, while in the days of *Solidarity* lines formed at 5 A.M. to get ever-more-critical newspapers, now the only licit publications that sell out quickly are Catholic periodicals like *Tygodnik Powszechny*. For the major dailies, the change has not been in the press run but in the fact that a large percentage of copies are returned unsold. Even more dismaying to the regime is the fact that, among those under thirty, readership has dropped dramatically: nearly 15 percent of those surveyed in 1982 claimed never to read dailies or periodicals and only 4.7



percent read the daily specifically aimed at young people.

In an effort to attract readers, newspapers have published explicit articles on sex (formerly a virtually forbidden subject in People's Poland), have featured a Barbara Walters interview with Jaruzelski, as well as Rakowski's verbal duel with the shipyard workers of Gdansk on the anniversary of the founding of Solidarity (after a recording of it had been broadcast by Radio Free Europe), and have reprinted the sharp exchanges between Urban and foreign correspondents from the West and the Soviet bloc at press conferences to which Polish journalists were not invited. Occasionally, newspapers try to make it appear that an article has been written by or about a dissident — which would indeed help to sell papers — when, in fact, the dissident is only mentioned in passing.

If, nowadays, journalists enjoy relative freedom to report on the country's economic and social problems, reports on the battles for power in Poland are carefully censored by writers as well as by the censors. For the rulers, the hope is that this manipulated freedom gradually will improve their image and convince the population that the society is so divided that only Jaruzelski and his supporters can serve as mediators. None of this, though, has made readers interested in what the official media have to say. In the meantime, many are willing to take real risks to read, and pass on, dissident publications, and to listen to Radio Free Europe, which the government itself concedes is practically the second channel in Poland.

While the media managers of the Jaruzelski regime are allowing some relatively honest images to appear in the Polish press, they have had no qualms about resorting to deliberate falsification to destroy the public image of Solidarity. For the most part, the falsification is poorly done since the journalists doing it, as an internal Party report concluded in July 1983, "don't understand the current policies of the Party or believe there is a way out of the crisis; instead, they look back on the hopes of the Solidarity era

and those who are loyal to the Party are still on the defensive." Almost invariably, those journalists who attack Solidarity in print do so under pseudonyms. Attempts to vilify Lech Walesa on television programs have generally been as clumsy as similar attempts in print. In one "news special," a tape purporting to show Lech Walesa asking his brother how to invest his millions was broadcast after the news. It was patched together so badly that, according to Warsaw gossip, after the usual praise of the staff's propaganda effort the First Party Secretary for Polish Television News complained about how unconvincing the program had been.

Since Poland's present rulers are even less able than their predecessors to make their rule tolerable to the population, they have had to allow safety valves. Tiny publications and Church-sponsored publications are permitted far more freedom than mass-circulation journals. Meanwhile, the provision in the Solidarity-era censorship law that allows journals to indicate with an ellipsis (...) when a passage or even a whole article has been removed and to cite the section of the law used to justify the censors' decision is still in effect. Only Catholic journals take advantage of it, however. Their journalists can thus make it clear to their readers that they were censored. Readers, skilled in reading between the lines, can speculate on what was deleted. The ellipses serve as a constant reminder of the degree to which the regime controls the media.

For those living through this war between a regime and a populace it has governed largely by force and intimidation, the concessions to popular opposition are only part of a waiting game. Journalists opposed to the repression cannot force the government to change. The government has so far been unable to convince them or their readers of its legitimacy. Nor can it stop the underground press, now a pervasive part of Polish life. Instead, those on all sides wait, as both Dawid F and Malgorzata Z, put it in separate interviews, "for a miracle." ■



**Underground news:** Police raids carried out under martial law temporarily curtailed many underground activities. Now, some 700 underground publications appear regularly. The backroom printshop shown here is in Krakow.



# USSR: HOW LENIN'S GUIDELINES SHAPE THE NEWS

by RAYMOND H. ANDERSON

**T**he Leninist mission of the Soviet press is to shape public opinion at home and to influence — or confuse — it abroad. The Soviet leadership dislikes undertaking any dangerous or controversial action without first having prepared public opinion. If studied alertly, therefore, the controlled Soviet press will, over time, provide clues to Moscow's seemingly enigmatic intentions and behavior.

Many daunting challenges have confronted Soviet journalists as they have sought to present world events in a manner that will assure public support for decisions made by the nation's leaders — from Moscow's signing of the non-aggression treaty with Nazi Germany in 1939 through the suppression of the nationalist uprising in Hungary in 1956, the crushing of the liberalization movement in Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, to the Politburo's decision to boycott the Olympic Games in Los Angeles. Because the Soviet people are very keen on sports, justifying the Olympic boycott decision may well have posed one of the more awkward challenges.

When faced by such tests, the Soviet Union's leading journalists — well trained, generously rewarded, and unashamedly cynical — have responded with far more competence and confidence than is generally recognized in the West. They are capable professionals who, like journalists everywhere, want to do their job well. Also, as insiders who share in power and its rewards, they are highly motivated.

In times of strain, Soviet journalists meticulously select bits and pieces of in-

formation to support the official line, casting aside information that is unsuitable. They search intently for items and commentary in publications around the world — in countries big or small — and quote those portions that suit their needs. They find it more convincing, for example, to inform their readers of *The Washington Post's* exposé or criticism of some White House action than to report or criticize the action on their own.

They are aware that if news reports or commentaries are to influence public opinion they must have a core of fact; the interpretation can be turned upside down or inside out. When all else fails, Soviet journalists know that they can play to the inherent, almost mystical, Russian chauvinism and fear of foreign enemies.

In Moscow during the crisis year of 1968, I watched the press use the technique of preparing Soviet public opinion

and ideological controls and making political, public-opinion, and military preparations. In May, after months of disapproving silence followed by grumbling and veiled threats, the differences flared into the open and the Soviet press began to warn of conspiracies in Prague by "circles hostile to socialism."

There were allegations that the Prague reformers were being manipulated by West German revanchists eager to recover territories lost in the war. (Any suspicion of a link to German aggressors is still emotionally potent in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.) All the while, there was uncertainty and debate in the West as to whether the Soviets would dare to invade Czechoslovakia to crush the liberalization movement. The United States, and even Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia — who knew something about Kremlin decision-making — doubted to the end that the Soviets would dare to invade.

But in the judgment of a few analysts in Moscow that summer there remained little doubt after July 11 that an invasion had probably become inevitable. July 11 was the day that *Pravda* voiced alarm about "counterrevolutionary forces." One thing the Soviet leadership could not possibly tolerate in a neighboring Communist-ruled nation was "counter-revolution." Dissent, yes. Outright hostility, maybe. Counterrevolution, never. Authorization by the Central Committee for the press to use that dreaded word could only mean that public opinion was being readied for invasion.

When the invaders struck on the night of August 20-21, United States officials were "stunned," it was reported from Washington.

An uneasy challenge facing the Soviet press now is what it calls the "undeclared war" in Afghanistan. It was clear to me on my last visit to the Soviet Union that there is serious unrest among the

## BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

for the invasion of Czechoslovakia by a step-by-step sharpening of polemics until the very eve of the invasion, when *Pravda* finally put the Kremlin's cards on the table by declaring bluntly that counterrevolution must be "nipped in the bud."

The invasion took the United States government by surprise. Yet the clues were in the press for all to read. The Soviet Union would not invade — short of emergency — until it had prepared public opinion. Once this had been done it could hardly avoid going ahead with the invasion.

When Alexander Dubcek and his anti-Stalinist supporters won control of the Czechoslovak Communist Party early in 1968, Moscow was distressed but kept its press silent while tightening security

*Raymond H. Anderson, who has covered the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East for The New York Times, teaches journalism at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.*



### A large band led by Ahmad Shah Massoud

The sergeant was critical, like many

**Happy warriors:** *The front page of the December 31, 1983, Red Star features an upbeat piece on the Afghan war.*

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performers start to play only when the director brings down his baton. They are obedient to his every move and responsive to his every mood. Foreign analysts can make informed guesses about Kremlin intentions by listening and watching carefully. So it was with the Olympic boycott.

To alert readers of the Soviet press, it became evident weeks — even months — before the June 2 sign-up deadline that Moscow was unlikely to send competitors unless President Reagan did something highly uncharacteristic, such as publicly apologizing for having called the Soviet Union “barbarian” and a “focus of evil” and then calling off his proclaimed World Crusade against Communism. (It was his call for an anti-Soviet crusade that, more than anything else, embittered the Kremlin.)

By April, it was quite evident — to

this reader of the Soviet press, at least — that Soviet athletes were not going to Los Angeles. The persisting uncertainty in the minds of some officials and writers reflected wishful thinking, as well as Moscow’s success in playing a public-opinion game of suspense. Some American officials — including diplomats in Moscow who weren’t paying attention — and a few editorial and sports writers in this country were saying up to the day of the Moscow announcement that it was all bluff.

Way back in September 1983, nine months before the deadline, a hint came from the Soviet press attaché in Washington, Vladimir S. Mikoyan, that Moscow had misgivings about taking part in the Los Angeles games. In remarks to American journalists, Mikoyan said that the Soviet Union was troubled about travel arrangements for the athletes in

Los Angeles, about living quarters, about fairness of judging, and, most important, about safety for the athletes.

In themselves, Mikoyan’s remarks were not conclusive or especially alarming, but they were a clue — Moscow’s first signal. Another signal, transmitted both to the home audience and abroad, came on January 19, when Marat A. Gramov, head of the Soviet National Olympic Committee, accused the State Department of interfering with travel arrangements and complained bluntly about security problems in Los Angeles.

The buildup thereafter followed a traditional pattern of Soviet preparation of public opinion for something unpleasant. After some tentative criticism, on April 3 the newspaper *Sovetsky Sport* printed a chilling report on conditions in Los Angeles, quoting from several foreign publications, including *The Economist* of London, which, the Soviet paper told its readers, had described Los Angeles as a city of “violent lunatics” that had risen to first place among American cities in the number of murders. *Sovetsky Sport* also told its readers that the State Department and other American agencies were preparing a guidebook on how to entice Communist athletes to defect.

By this time, the parents of prospective Soviet competitors surely must have begun to feel uneasy about what awaited their sons and daughters in Los Angeles.

On April 6, a Tass dispatch in *Sovetsky Sport* charged that a flagrant anti-Soviet campaign was under way in Los Angeles and that the International Olympic Committee was taking a “conciliatory, appeasing position” on American violations of the Olympic Charter. This reference to the charter was significant. Moscow henceforth could justify almost any decision if the sacred charter had been violated.

Early in April there was a meeting in Moscow of Olympic committees of the Soviet bloc nations to discuss participation in the Olympics. That was the tipoff that a boycott was under discussion and was probably inevitable.

On April 16, the head of the Soviet Olympic Committee said at a news conference that the conditions in Los Angeles were perilous for Soviet athletes. Two days later, *Sovetsky Sport* quoted from what it termed Polish, Hungarian,

## Soviet satire: no holds barred

After the decision not to take part in the Los Angeles games, the Soviet press turned to satire — an important weapon in Moscow’s arsenal of opinion-shaping devices — to overcome any lingering doubts about the wisdom of that decision. In the May 20 issue of *Gudok*, the paper for railroad workers, Viktor Orlov published a feuilleton about a purported meeting at the Los Angeles Hilton of the Ban the Soviets Coalition — a group made up, Orlov said, of World War II Soviet deserters, Hitlerites, Ku Klux Klan members, Hell’s Angels bikers, retired Green Berets, and young Mafia hit men.

The head of the Ban the Soviets Coalition, David Balsiger, an advertising man and writer of evangelical books, was described by Orlov as urging action to make Los Angeles a hell for Communist athletes.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” Balsiger said into the microphone in a solemn voice that at times broke into a shriek. “Two years ago our wise president (*scattered applause*) proclaimed a ‘Crusade’ against the Soviets. (*Applause*) He vowed to destroy Russia — the ‘empire of evil.’ It is our sacred duty to help him! (*Tumultuous applause*) And the Olympic Games give us our best opportunity to do this.”

Among other tactics outlined at the meeting, Orlov wrote, would be the howling of sirens all night outside athletes’ quarters to prevent any “Reds” from getting even an hour’s sleep. The harassment by sirens would alternate with tape-recorded shouts, screams, and offers of money to athletes to defect.

An aging Nazi speaking with a German accent tells of plans for billboards along the Los Angeles freeways saying “You are in Free America. If you want freedom call these numbers. . . .”

The performance of Communist gymnasts would be sabotaged, a Ban the Soviets activist said, by mixing broken glass in the talcum powder they use to work the bars. Activists would break the spokes of bicycles and the racers’ legs. Other plans depicted in Orlov’s satire included the printing of 500,000 posters urging Americans to “Kill a Russian!”

As the meeting was in full heat, Orlov wrote, word came in that the Soviet Union had dropped out of the Olympics. A groan went up in the hall. Who would pay now for all these costly arrangements? Maybe, it was suggested, a complaint could be lodged with the United Nations to compel “the cursed Soviets” to make restitution for the wasted effort and lost money.

R.H.A.





**Izvestia gets vicious:** The title of this June 1, 1984, cartoon is "A Reliable Consultant." The caption reads: "As has been reported in the [Soviet] press, the White House has issued a secret directive for the construction of ten huge camps for people detained in the main military districts of the country." Reagan, with a "Decree for the Construction of Concentration Camps," shakes hands with Heinrich Himmler, who holds a list of Nazi camps.

Yugoslav, and Indian misgivings about conditions for the Summer Games.

By the end of April, Moscow's tactics had created the situation abroad that it likes most — confusion. **BOYCOTT BY SOVIET APPEARS UNLIKELY**, said the headline over a dispatch from Moscow in the April 11 *The New York Times*.

Two weeks later, the headline for a *Times* article about the emergency Olympics Committee meeting in Lau-

sanne, Switzerland, held to discuss Soviet complaints, was **SOVIET PARTICIPATION IS STILL UNCERTAIN**.

Finally, on May 8, with the world waiting tensely, the official word came from Moscow in a statement by the Soviet National Olympic Committee announcing solemnly that Soviet athletes would not be going to the Olympic Games because of "gross flouting of the ideals and traditions of the Olympic

movement" by the Reagan administration, which it accused of stirring up "chauvinistic sentiments" and "anti-Soviet hysteria" and of allowing extremist organizations to create "unbearable conditions" and "undisguised threats."

By delaying its announcement and building up the suspense, the Soviet Union won worldwide, front-page banner display for its grievances against the Reagan administration.

In the wake of the boycott announcement the Soviet press quoted remarks by people and publications around the world endorsing Moscow's decision, ranging from the 1,000-circulation *Imongo Vaovao* in Madagascar to top athletes from the Soviet Union and bloc countries who felt relieved, they said, not to have to participate in Olympic games in a dangerous, hostile, and crassly commercialized Los Angeles.

On May 20, *Sovetsky Sport* quoted Georges Montaron, director of the French Roman Catholic weekly *Témoignage Chrétien*, as saying that there was truth in the Soviet Union's complaints: "Reagan's anti-Sovietism, which is the basis of his foreign policy, is so strong that a grave problem had arisen regarding safety for the Soviet athletes in Los Angeles."

If even a French Catholic regarded Los Angeles as dangerous for Soviet athletes, how could Soviet citizens think otherwise? ■

## COVERING AFGHANISTAN: A REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

by CHRISTINA DAMEYER

**M**any veteran war correspondents say that the war in Afghanistan is the hardest they've covered. It is tricky and physically arduous just to get inside the country, since Western journalists are rarely permitted entry.

A reporter must secretly cross what

is, in effect, the southern extension of the Iron Curtain, dropped between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Fortunately for both journalists and Afghan resistance fighters (mujahideen), the frontier is crisscrossed by trails that have been used for centuries, by the armies of Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan, as well as by nomad camel caravans and smugglers. But to gain access to the battlefields entails following hardy guerrillas up and down 10,000- to 15,000-foot

mountains for days and sometimes weeks.

First, however, one must enlist the patronage of one of the Afghan resistance parties based in Peshawar, across the Khyber Pass from Afghanistan. A circuit of the various groups is made. Fragrant green tea is sipped and polite conversation exchanged while both sides size each other up. Most Western journalists approach the moderate parties, particularly that of Sayyid Ahmad Gai-

*Christina Dameyer is a free-lance writer and a correspondent for Pacific News Service.*





Ed Grazda

**Forbidding terrain:** Two mujahideen traverse a mountain path in Wardak province, west of Kabul.

lani, who enjoys good public relations in Western Europe and America. But these parties are much weaker in the field than the Islamic fundamentalist ones, which are responsible for most of the fighting in the country.

If approved of, the party offers to take the journalist inside, with exhortations to keep the plans secret. As long as a month may elapse before the actual departure. One British journalist, Tim Cooper, assigned to cover the Panjsher Valley for BBC, watched despairingly as his wedding date crept up and passed before he even left Peshawar.

The days of waiting are spent examining manuals of Soviet weapons and military tactics, reading nineteenth-century classics like Elphinstone's *An Account of the Kingdom of Caboul*, and comparing notes with other journalists. Everything from the Achilles heels of the heavily armored Mi-24 helicopter gunship to the latest wild rumor that Andropov's son escaped to Afghanistan and joined the mujahideen is discussed.

Rumors fly fast and thick in Peshawar, a frontier town full of intrigue. It is the meeting place for groups as diverse as the Soviet-backed Al-Zulfikar terrorist faction seeking to destabilize the Pakistan government and international drug

dealers making the "Khyber Connection." The area harbors thousands of informers and Soviet agents seeking to infiltrate the resistance parties, according to the former deputy chief of the Afghan KGB, who defected last year.

Finally, late one night a quiet knock comes at the door and the journalist is spirited away disguised as an Afghan guerrilla. To add authenticity, Western accoutrements like glasses are removed and hair is dyed black. Most men grow beards for the occasion. For those who persist in looking un-Afghan, there is the dismal fate of being clapped into an Afghan woman's shroud, which is stifling but has the merit of concealing everything but the wearer's eyes. (Although considered anachronistic, these garments have proved indispensable in the war for everything from slipping foreigners across the border to clandestine mujahideen operations. Tribesmen have been known to wear their wives' *chadari* to infiltrate cities, where men appearing on the street are abducted into the army.)

A gauntlet of Pakistan army checkpoints must be run to reach the border. If intercepted at these posts, one can be thrown into prison or at the least reprimanded and sent back to Peshawar.

Once in Afghanistan, some journalists

follow what the mujahideen call "tourist routes," well-trodden paths near the Pakistan border. Fighting can be watched from scenic vista points. "We can take you to Jaji for four days or to Jaji and Jelalabad combined for eight days," a party official told me, sounding as if he was selling package tours.

**B**ut even the safer trips are rigorous and at times dangerous. Subsisting on a diet of bread, greasy rice, and weak tea, one often marches most of the night, stumbling up and down precipitous mountain paths. After a few hours' sleep, one is awakened for prayers at 4:30 A.M. and trudges on again.

After marching eighteen hours straight, one British journalist dozed off and fell and hurt himself. His mujahideen escorts flashed on lights and shouted loudly, "Are you all right?" even though an Afghan army garrison was quite close by. The guerrillas are notoriously cavalier about taking precautions. Since the Soviets have been much more aggressive in ambushing mujahideen caravans this year, the danger for journalists traveling with them has increased.



"If you were separated from the mujahideen during an ambush or helicopter gunship attack, could you find your way back to Pakistan by yourself?" one ex-army officer asked me. When I said I thought I could, he offered some survival tips, including the encouraging fact that rabbits and birds can be eaten uncooked.

Some journalists worry about the mujahideen's fatalistic attitude toward death. "Every bullet has a name on it, and if it's yours you can't avoid it," the guerrillas say, shrugging their shoulders. As Muslims, they believe that if they are *shahid*, martyred in the cause of holy war, they will go straight to heaven and sit close to Allah. This incentive makes them unafraid to take great risks with their lives, and sometimes those of journalists. Some commanders, however, are more careful. For instance, Maulavi Jelaluddin Haqqani, the Amir of Paktia Province, keeps close tabs on the situation and never allows journalists to go closer to the action than he is sure is safe.

Some adventurous journalists take daring journeys. One French photographer bought two horses used for *buzkashi*, the rugged Afghan national sport played with a goat's corpse, and toured northeastern Afghanistan for ten months. One horse died, and the other returned nearly a skeleton. He rode along the banks of the Amu Darya River and looked across into the Soviet Union. One time on foot, he recalls, he was spotted by the sentry of a Soviet garrison, who sent armored personnel carriers after him. He eluded them long enough to dig a hole in the ground and conceal himself.

He also ventured into the Wakhan Corridor, the highly strategic panhandle of Afghanistan annexed by the Soviet Union in 1981. The Afghan inhabitants were driven out and replaced by Soviet Central Asians. They share the mountainous strip of land with a few Siberian tigers and underground SS-20 missile bases targeted on China.

If the French photographer holds the record for the longest time spent in Afghanistan during the war, British combat photographer Peter Jouvenal has probably made the most trips in of any journalist — nineteen. He can outmarch most Afghan tribesmen (historically

considered the toughest guerrillas in Asia) and is the Peshawar expert-in-residence on the military side of the war.

Another British journalist, John Gunston, was smuggled into Kabul, the capital, which is the city most firmly in Soviet hands. He accompanied the mujahideen on a successful nighttime mortar attack on the Defense Ministry.

One of the most legendary adventurers drawn to this war was an Italian, Raffaele Favero, who had spent many years before in Afghanistan and spoke fluent Pashto. Once, riding horseback through the wildest part of the country, he had been kidnapped by bandits and held for ransom. He returned after the Soviet invasion to make films that have been aired on Australian television.

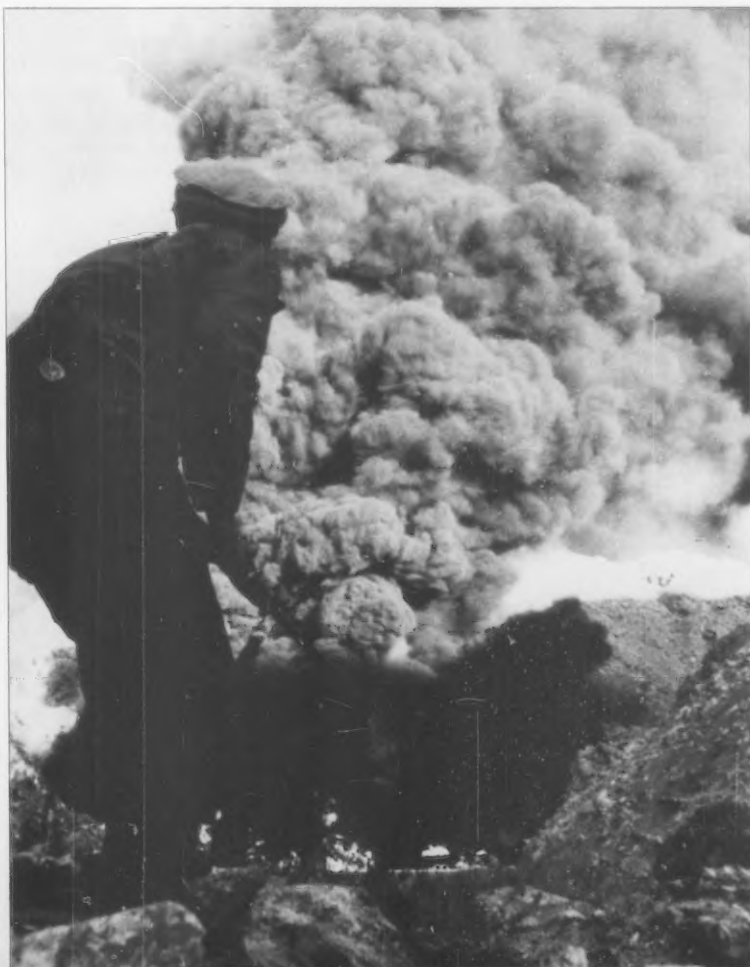
Last year, he went by yak through the towering Pamir mountains at the tip of the Wakhan Corridor bordering China.

No Westerner had been to that area since the nineteenth-century British explorers. The only signs of life now were Soviet bases surrounded by barbed wire and bristling with tanks, surface-to-air missiles, and anti-aircraft guns. Evading reconnaissance patrols every day, he watched Soviet soldiers drilling.

Having survived this dangerous trip, he was killed while filming a mujahideen attack on a Paktia Province army garrison in October 1983. He was the second journalist to die in Afghanistan since the Soviet invasion. A Norwegian was killed in the western city of Herat earlier in 1983.

There are also risks for mujahideen groups who take reporters in. The tribal law of the Pashtuns requires that they defend a guest to the death. "Every mujahid in the area would have to be killed before you could be killed," one guer-

**The ambush:** On April 22, 1984, a mujahideen group trapped and destroyed some 40 Russian gas trucks, tanks, and armored personnel carriers in the Sarang Valley.



Chris Gregory/Gamma



rilla gallantly assured me. When French doctor Philippe Augoyard was captured by the Soviets in early 1983, the mujahideen claimed to have lost seventy men fighting to save him.

Much more damaging, every now and then an enemy spy slips in as a journalist. The story is told of some Afghan communists who posed as French journalists. According to this account, which is credible but cannot be confirmed, they used a hidden radio to transmit the location of a mujahideen camp near Mazar-i-Sharif, and the next day a fleet of Soviet MiGs and helicopter gunships razed it to the ground.

Even bona fide journalists can inadvertently cause swift retaliatory strikes on the sites of successful guerrilla attacks they report, or on the strongholds of mujahideen groups they describe as strong and effective. A good example of this is the spotlight focused almost exclusively on Ahmad Shah Massoud by the Western press. He has been described as the Tito of Afghanistan and the Panjsher Valley he commands was built up as the symbol of the resistance. It has increasingly become a matter of prestige for the Soviets to crush Massoud and his mujahideen. In the most recent offensive last April, they doubled their assault force and came dangerously close to doing so. If they succeed, the

disproportionate publicity given the Panjsher will play into their hands. The international image of the mujahideen and the morale of other resistance groups will both be dealt a strong blow.

The mujahideen perceive other faults in media coverage of their war. Foremost is the lack of it. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who leads one of the strongest resistance parties, said in a recent interview that only 10 percent of what is happening inside Afghanistan is reported in the international press. At most, there are only a dozen journalists, generally European, inside the country during the "fighting season" — April to October. They stay in for periods of one week to two months. But, as Claude Malhuret, head of the medical relief organization *Medecins sans Frontières*, has written in *Foreign Affairs*, "If a small organization like ours can succeed in maintaining more than twenty physicians on permanent duty in four provinces in Afghanistan despite government acts of violence against them, the news media could do likewise."

Many journalists just stay in Peshawar and interview party spokesmen. But, as one guerrilla commander complained, "They talk to the talkers, not the fighters. You never see all those politicians and bureaucrats here at the battlefield."

Some mujahideen parties, dissatisfied with the quantity and quality of coverage they get, are training their own crews to use Super-8 movie cameras.

For their part, Western journalists have a difficult time obtaining reliable information. Although the guerrillas have toned down their extravagant claims of Soviet losses and their own victories, exaggeration is still a problem. When a MiG or helicopter gunship goes down, six parties will all claim to have shot down a plane that day. "If the number of Afghan army defectors and casualties claimed by all the mujahideen parties are added up, it would be found to be twenty times as large as the army," one Pakistani analyst wryly noted.

It is difficult also for journalists to substantiate many reports given by the mujahideen, who are generally vague about details.

Yet despite the difficulties of gathering news from occupied Afghanistan, many European newspapers have almost daily coverage of what is going on there. By contrast, U.S. news media assign such a low priority to the region that many Americans remain unaware that a war is being fought there. When I say that I have just returned from Afghanistan, the frequent response is a confused look and then a polite, "Oh . . . did you go there for business or pleasure?" ■

**The mourners:** Mujahideen read from the Koran around the bier of a young man killed in a May 1984 Soviet bombing attack.





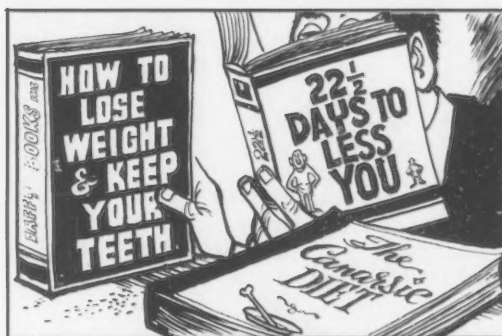
**Sure a  
well-balanced  
diet is a key  
to good  
health, but...**



**what about  
the millions of  
food-faddists,  
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junk-food kids  
and gulp-&-  
dash execs?**



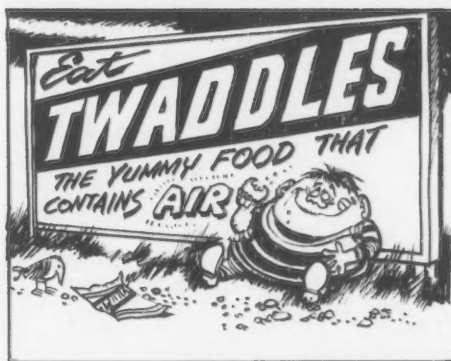
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# The Cuban connection and the gringo press

by JOHN ROTHCHILD

**A**t a recent Spanish-language fete in Miami, Representative Claude Pepper, a prominent local gringo, mistook the introduction of the keynote speaker for his own and sauntered to the podium to extemporize in English, while the keynoter, a Cuban, waited politely in the wings.

Pepper's momentary confusion somehow symbolizes the perplexity of Miami's newspapers and radio and TV stations as they try to position themselves in this unusual and uncertain market and figure out just who speaks to whom and in what language. In the city of Miami, Hispanics now outnumber both non-Latin whites and blacks, and they account for over a third of the residents of Dade County as a whole.

One senses that there is assimilation, accommodation, a harmonizing of the immigrant or the exile with the native, especially among the second-generation Cubans. On the other hand, there is strong evidence of continued disharmony in the media. The most obvious example is in the most important medium of all, street signs, which the county is prohibited by its famous anti-bilingual ordinance from printing in Spanish. On the new Metrorail system, which will serve millions of Latin American residents and tourists, there are danger signs in both English and Spanish, but informational signs are only in English, and numerous travelers will doubtless get lost because of this.

This is an extreme denial of reality; more subtle forms of disharmony are found in the daily press. Recently, Roberto Fabricio, executive editor of *The Miami Herald's El Herald* edition, wrote a column about how the biggest story in the gringo media was the spraying of the Mediterranean fruit fly, to

which Hispanic people, some of whom live in the actual district to be sprayed, were indifferent; while the biggest story in the Spanish media was the release of Jorge Valls, a Cuban poet who had spent over twenty years in Cuban jails — an event all but ignored, for example, on daytime English-language radio. On Spanish television news, the release of Valls was the lead story, while local gringo television led with the launch of the space shuttle.

Is this a city of Latin Americans who are trying to become North Americans, or is it moving fast toward a permanent division along cultural, political, and linguistic lines? The question is of particular concern to Miami's newspapers and its radio and TV stations. Some sta-

low-trimmed structure they both still occupy. The *News* is a worthy paper in many respects, but its circulation currently hovers between 60,000 and 70,000, while the *Herald's* has risen to over 450,000.

The new building was open for business just about the time that the greatest number of exiles from the Castro regime began arriving in Miami. Before that, Miami hadn't exactly been Deep South, but that was its image: a reporter could prepare for a job on Biscayne Bay by reading *All the King's Men* or perhaps the short stories of Flannery O'Connor. Recently, the *Herald* has been presenting itself more as an entrance to El Dorado than as an exit from Tara, and today's arriving reporters read *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

As the Cuban exiles surrounded it, the *Herald* expanded and improved its Latin American news coverage, accepting the role that the great migration to Miami seemed to require. Here was a major U.S. newspaper with more extensive Caribbean coverage than any other in the country, and yet the Cuban community, which has the greatest interest in Caribbean affairs, by and large neglected to subscribe. It is understandable that few exiles would have taken the *Herald* on their arrival; they thought they would soon be going home. But as Cubans settled into the city, the *Herald* still did not attract enough of them to boost its overall sales. During the 1970s, the population of Dade grew from 1.2 million to more than 1.6 million, while the *Herald's* daily circulation stayed at about 450,000.

(The paper's director of circulation, Ralph Gibson, says that some in-house studies found an increase in readership during this decade when circulation was flat. This suggests that there was some growing interest in the newspaper among people who did not themselves buy it.)

In 1976, the *Herald* began to publish

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## LETTER FROM MIAMI

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tion owners and managers contend that they are broadcasting across a traditional melting pot, while others contend that Latin America is coagulating around them and claim they know how to take advantage of that fact.

The *Miami Herald*, the city's largest newspaper, is a focal point of gringo-Hispanic coexistence: what has happened to the *Herald* in the last twenty-five years is, in microcosm, what has happened to the city. Bought by the Knight family from its local owners in the late 1930s, the *Herald* later became the southernmost publication in the Knight-Ridder chain. Its principal competition, in the 1940s and the 1950s, came from the afternoon paper, *The Miami News*. The *Herald* gained its preeminence in the 1960s, as the circulation of the *News* began to wane.

The *Herald's* importance in the town was symbolized by the striking new building it put up along Biscayne Bay. Construction began in 1960. The two rival papers merged their circulation and classified operations in the six-story yel-

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*John Rothchild's book on Florida, Up For Grabs, will be published in February. He was assisted in the research for this article by Joette Lorion.*



*El Herald*, partly on the assumption that Cuban exiles would take to the merchandise if it was in Spanish. The idea, from the inception, was to make *El Herald* as faithful a philosophical reflection of its gringo parent as possible. *El Herald* has its own columnists, its own social news, and it plays certain Cuban stories more prominently than the *Herald*, but it is, really, an edition rather than a separate publication.

Editorials are the same in both papers; major news stories that appear in one appear without major alteration in the other. In fact, general-assignment reporters for *El Herald*, all of whom speak Spanish as a first language, write their news stories in English and their stories are then translated into Spanish by a separate translator. The sole medium of exchange between editors of the two publications is still the gringo medium. And *El Herald*'s role within the larger organization is reflected by the form in which it is delivered to many subscribers — that is, with the regular *Herald* folded around the Spanish version.

*El Herald* has its own staff of twenty-four people. They occupy one section of the huge fifth-floor newsroom that is basically one grand and unpartitioned expanse of departments and sections, all with a marvelous view of the bay. In

talking to reporters who have worked on both the Spanish and English editions, one senses subtle differences in *El Herald*'s style of coverage. One told me: "If you write about Cuba for the *Herald*, you think of it as an accessible country with real people whom you can call for quotes and reactions. If you write about Cuba for *El Herald*, it is a never-never land where humans don't respond, and so you get all your quotes from Cuban radio or from the official Castro newspaper, *Granma*."

But such differences in the reporting of Cuban news, if they do exist, are apparent only to journalists and not to the readers. Certainly, they have not been obvious enough to convince the Cuban community that *El Herald* is anything but a *Herald* copy. In fact, the connection between the two papers is a cause of *El Herald*'s lack of popularity. In eight years, *El Herald* has gained 50,000 weekday subscribers, which is not a disastrous result, but I am told that the paper, given its investment, hoped for much more. Obviously, it is not simply language that keeps many Cubans from reading the *Herald*. It is also politics — not local politics, but international.

Since the arrival of the first Cubans, Miami has been obsessed with a drama taking place outside its limits, and out-

side the U.S. limits as well. Local officials are judged not so much on how they stand on taxation and budgets, but on how they feel about the war in El Salvador, about spies in the city, about accused terrorists, about Castro. In most regions in America, the *Herald* would be described as a moderate newspaper, perhaps slightly conservative; certainly it has never gone out of its way to say a kind word for Fidel. Yet for years the *Herald* has been stuck with the image that it is soft on the enemy.

The fact that the paper tries to report comprehensively and accurately about Cuba (mentioning, for instance, that the country has schools and hospitals) is, to many first-generation exiles, evidence not of fair-mindedness but of treason. The exiles' hatred of leftists has exceeded their love of the First Amendment, at least as it applies to the way gringos report on Latin America.

**N**obody knows how many readers *El Herald* would have if its political views did not differ so sharply from those of a large percentage of the Hispanic population. Its competitor in the Spanish-language market is *Diario Las Americas*, a family-owned newspaper whose banquet inspired the Pepper confusion mentioned above. *Diario Las Americas* claims a circulation greater than that of *El Herald*, about 62,000. It would seem that *El Herald* offers better coverage; *Diario Las Americas*, which publishes entirely in black and white, gets most of its stories from the wire services. But *Diario* has the more popular attitude. Its editorial of June 1, 1984 (it prints editorials in both languages, so this is the paper's translation) nicely illustrates the twenty-five-year-old difference of opinion between the two cultures of Miami:

In the United States of America exists traditional devotion for negotiations, inspired in generous feelings of human cordiality. But this devotion almost always closes its eyes to reality and ends up in painful surrenderings for the cause of liberty and for the noble American feelings that encourage those negotiations. Thus, in line with that characteristic of the Americans in general, and particularly of the so-called liberal segments, better defined as liberaloids, the negotiations with the Salvadoran communists will be received with naive joy or with calculated sat-

**It's Cuba that counts:** Roberto Fabricio edits *El Herald*, The Miami Herald's Spanish-language edition, whose 50,000 circulation might be a lot bigger if it were tougher on Castro.



CJR/Albert Coya/*El Herald*



isfaction by many influential sectors in the United States.

Little neighborhood newspapers, the *periodicos*, are stacked up for free distribution in the coffee shops along Southwest Eighth Street, known as Little Havana. Some are shoppers, others are inspirational, others are political. The most famous of the political *periodicos* is *La Verdad*. Readers drive or walk to the Versailles Restaurant to pick it up on Fridays. The publisher, Marieta Fandiño, sits at a table near one of the huge painted mirrors to receive well-wishers. She arrived from Cuba in 1960, lived in New York for some time, and then returned to Miami. Gradually she became absorbed in the anticommunist cause. In the 1970s she started the newspaper, and for twelve years she has written, edited, laid out, printed, and distributed 9,000 copies weekly.

*La Verdad* is less a journal than a crusade, with its lists of known communists, its advertisements for firearms, its eloquent damnation of left-leaners — “We have denounced those who receive their orders from Cuba . . . all that attempt the infamous dialogue with the executioner” — and its penchant for raising politics, as they are so often raised in Latin America, to the level of a Last Judgment (“Holy Week is eternal castigation for all the Judases”).

This is the kind of writing that *The Miami Herald* or *El Herald* could not or would not indulge in, but Latin America is very familiar with it. Not that *La Verdad* is particularly influential with civic leaders; it is a peripheral presence — to some a curiosity, to others a joke. But to many it is the last pure voice of exile rage. If you had to pick a perfect representation of the inner feelings of the first-generation exile community, you would do better with *La Verdad* than with *Diario Las Americas* and better with *Diario Las Americas* than with *El Herald*. It is the soul of *The Miami Herald* to which many first-generation exiles have not subscribed.

The *Herald*, meanwhile, says it has made the recent and happy discovery that its fastest-growing group of new subscribers is made up of second-generation Hispanics who take the paper in English. No numbers are made available to support this claim, but it suggests that

where the middle ground (attempting to reach Hispanics in Spanish) may have failed, the extreme will succeed. If you are gringo enough to like the *Herald* point of view, presumably you are gringo enough to read it in English.

A large percentage of the 700,000-plus Cuban exiles here read no newspapers at all. Their voice is the Cuban radio stations and, to some extent, the television stations. Radio has a different role in the Hispanic community than in the gringo: music is less important than talk and soap operas. The most popular station among Hispanics in the Miami Metro/Dade County area, according to the fall 1982/spring 1983 Arbitron radio ethnic report, is WQBA-AM, which is all news and soaps. At various street corners on Southwest Eighth Street, the flower sellers and lime hawkers hold radios to their ears. One can hear continuous news broadcasts while waiting at stoplights.

The anticommunist struggle is usually the biggest news, and sometimes it is the only news. Advertisements exhort listeners to send packages to their relatives in Cuba — “Send a minipaquete and get a free Seiko watch” — but that is the only coexistence that is tolerated. Radio

correspondents across Latin America are poised to give up-to-the-minute reports on the progress of leftists everywhere. In June, for example, radio station WOCN took us live to the bedside of Eden Pastora, the noted anti-Sandinista rebel wounded on the Costa Rican border, to learn that he was in good health, and that “it is false information that ARDE is allied with the FDN.” Miami listeners know their ARDEs and their FDNs better than they know their HUDs and their EPAs. The important acronyms are the acronyms of the counterrevolutionaries.

A flip of the dial to the Cuban radio takes gringos into an antiworld where enemies of American liberal opinion (the Chilean junta, for instance) are often lionized as heroes, while any U.S. politician who suggests a dialogue with Castro, the Sandinistas, or the Salvadoran rebels is vilified as a dangerous extremist. The radio serves not to transmit information but to drum up support; it is a cheerleader for a cause. Leftist forces are usually “cowardly,” even in the regular news broadcasts; juntas and right-wingers are “heroic.”

Certain of these stations have been accused of using the airwaves to incite riots and to call out local armies of rowdies

**Radio star:** Charismatic and fiercely anticommunist dee-jay/commentators like Armando Perez Roura (right rear) are the chief assets of Miami's Hispanic radio stations.



CJR/Albert Coyle/El Herald



to disrupt liberal conferences (see "Thunder on the Right in Miami," *CJR*, January/February). These incidents are infrequent, but just recently Jane Fonda's appearance at a Burdine's department store was cancelled when WRHC radio got wind of it and reminded listeners of her trip to Hanoi during the Vietnam War. (Fonda appeared briefly at another Burdine's store in Miami.) Anticommunist passion, and the radio stations' dedication to the task of stirring it up, continue to alienate gringos from Hispanics in Miami, and to keep each side tuned to separate frequencies.

The success of one Hispanic radio station over another often depends on one person, who symbolizes the station for the entire community. Latin listeners seem to demand a single, charismatic, and doctrinaire dee-jay, not at all like the happy-go-lucky collection of oddballs that one finds on gringo radio. There have been recent radio wars in Miami over the employment of one Armando Perez Roura, who moves from one station to another and seems to take half the local audience with him. Roura's secretary explains that her boss worked at WRHC and made that number one, went to WQBA and made that number one, and now has gone to a smaller station, WOCN, which has awarded Roura a nearly 50 percent interest in the business. Many predict that WOCN will soon be number one. Roura, needless to say, is a vigorous critic of the left.

Of all the radio stations, Spanish and English, listeners of Hispanic descent, including thousands of bilinguals, overwhelmingly prefer the former. If Miami's Cubans have been assimilated, one couldn't prove it by the radio ratings published by Arbitron. A recent Arbitron survey of the Miami/Metro area revealed that the four most popular stations among Hispanics were Spanish-language stations. A gringo station was fifth, but it gets only 7.1 percent of the Hispanic listeners during an average fifteen-minute period.

**T**he melting-pot theory is also disproved, at least in the short term, by the extraordinary success of WLTW, local Spanish-language Channel 23, as shown by a February 1984 Metro/Dade County Arbitron report. Of all the viewers calling themselves Hispanic, an

average of 40 percent were tuned to WLTW during the survey period. During a previous rating period, November 1983, WLTW enjoyed only a 13 percent market share. Thus, WLTW's share had risen from 13 to 40 percent at a time when one would have expected a decline, with more bilingual Cubans switching to English channels. Director of sales Blaine Decker says that WLTW is the "highest-rated TV station in the U.S. by far. We are the only station in the country that beats three [network] affiliate newscasts in a metro area with our own news." (The fact that the earlier ratings were derived from a survey of viewers, while the recent ones come from electronic hookups to a sample of TV sets, may have affected the percentages.)

Perhaps it is the influx of 100,000 Mariel Cubans that has affected the TV ratings, but the Mariel boatlift took place four years ago. Another possible explanation for the surge in Channel 23's popularity is that it is now part of an international Spanish news network, and so offers the same kind of worldwide coverage in Spanish one gets from NBC or CBS in English. What this seems to suggest is that, given a choice between good gringo news and inferior Spanish news, Hispanic viewers will choose the former; but if the quality is similar, they will watch in Spanish even if they also speak and understand English.

The popularity among Spanish viewers of certain gringo TV stations has dropped as the popularity of WLTW has increased. One station whose rating has fallen off dramatically is WTVJ, the CBS affiliate. In November 1983, WTVJ got a 22 percent share of the Hispanic market in the Arbitron rating; three months later, in February 1984, it got only 9 percent. And WTVJ has a Cuban-American anchorwoman, Ana Azcuy.

A manager at WTVJ says that the fall-off has nothing to do with the station's relations to Cubans, but spokesmen at rival stations suggest that you can't succeed with halfway measures in Miami, and that having a Cuban anchorwoman speak English on a gringo channel is as ill-advised as printing a gringo newspaper in Spanish. If you are gringo enough to watch English-language TV, you are gringo enough to prefer Yankee announcers.

**P**erhaps in part because of the political schism, Cuban culture has been preserved in Miami: the first generation has held on to its language and its beliefs, and the older Cubans have been slow to seek U.S. citizenship. Younger Cubans are bilingual and in many respects fully Americanized, but there are too many Spanish-speakers here for them to be forced into gringothink, and too much commerce with Latin America for any intelligent Cuban-American to want to give up his language completely. The paradox of Miami is that while the second-generation Cubans are assimilating, the Miami area resembles Latin America more now than ever before.

There is superficial evidence that the English-language media are disengaging from Miami, keeping their base in the city but trying to attract the attention of gringos farther up the coast. During the past year, *Miami* magazine changed its name to *South Florida*, and, reading it, you might think at times you were in Fort Lauderdale. Some local TV stations often lead off their evening news with the "Broward Bureau," Broward being Fort Lauderdale's county. And the *Herald* has expanded its operations in Broward and farther north in Palm Beach County. Thomas Griffiths, former vice president for marketing of the *Fort Lauderdale News* and *Sun-Sentinel*, with which the *Herald* is in a circulation battle, told *The New York Times*: "They are losing a market share and seeing a changing market mix. They're seeking to reposition themselves."

Executives of the *Herald* deny this. Circulation director Ralph Gibson says that Browardization is a myth. The *Herald*, he explains, is expanding in Broward and Palm Beach, but then the *Herald* is expanding everywhere. Managers of English-language TV stations say the same — out of the difficulties of the last two decades, they are expecting a bumper crop of new Cuban-American consumers and viewers. After all, they already capture the 60 percent of the Hispanics who are not watching WLTW Channel 23.

What happens next is anybody's guess. The best index of Miami's future may be whether Channel 23's Spanish-language adult soap opera will continue to outdraw *Dynasty*. ■



# BOOKS

## Poli-spots on parade

### **The Spot: The Rise of Political Advertising on Television**

by Edwin Diamond and Stephen Bates  
MIT Press 416 pp \$17.50

**Packaging the Presidency: A History and Criticism of Presidential Campaign Advertising**  
by Kathleen Hall Jamieson  
Oxford University Press 480 pp. \$19.95

by JOEL SWERDLOW

As recently as 1968, headlines were proclaiming ADMEN JOIN THE RACE. But the truths so shocking in Joe McGinniss's *The Selling of the President 1968* have now become routine. The same person who worked on Pepsi's Michael Jackson commercials is working on Ronald Reagan's 1984 campaign, and few people think this is especially newsworthy.

The phenomenon is easy to observe.

*Joel Swerdlow is a writer who specializes in media and politics. He lives in Washington, D.C.*

Political TV commercials have become the largest single item in most major campaign budgets, absorbing tens of millions of dollars each election year. These commercials have made advertising people the new political insiders, changing the ways politicians look, talk, and think. It is not only presidential politics that have been affected. CBS's Robert Pierpoint reported recently, for example, that the North Carolina senatorial contest between incumbent Jesse Helms and now-governor Jim Hunt "is more a war of commercials than a campaign."

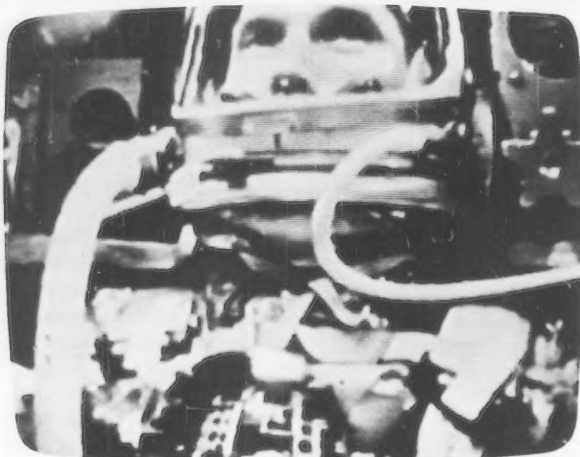
It is more difficult, however, to understand exactly if and how commercials change voter behavior. In terms of actual impact, the academic evidence includes one major study, *The Unseeing Eye* (published by G. P. Putnam's Sons in 1976), in which Thomas Patterson and Robert McClure concluded from their examination of the 1972 McGovern-Nixon campaign that political TV commercials had done more than news cov-

erage to provide voters with significant information. This alone should be enough to interest journalists in TV commercials, but *The Spot* and *Packaging the Presidency* also show that journalists — whether they like it or not — are an integral part of the story.

To begin with, political professionals now openly think in terms of "paid" and "unpaid" media. Paid media are political commercials. Unpaid media are stories done by reporters. Neither, in the view of many of these professionals, is necessarily fairer or more accurate than the other. Indeed, liberals, moderates, and conservatives apparently agree that paid media *increase* fairness and accuracy. "Left in the hands of just the free media," commercial-maker Michael Kaye told Diamond and Bates, "you'd get a slanted picture of the candidate. Paid media is important to give a balance."

Such a belief is particularly interesting in light of the fact — repeatedly demonstrated by these books — that com-

## TV political commercials: a drama in four acts



1. Identifying the candidate  
"Godspeed, John Glenn!"



2. Defining the issues  
"Ronald Reagan spoke out on the danger of the Soviet arms buildup long before it was fashionable"



mercials float somewhere above traditional notions of truth and falsehood. For example, one of Richard Nixon's 1968 campaign ads said, "Vietnam: You can make sure we're not trapped again." This statement is neither true nor false. It exists, and can be judged only by how it affects consumer (voter) behavior. As both books demonstrate, virtually all candidates construct commercials according to this standard.

**P**olitical professionals know that journalism is more bound by truth, which is why they assume that voters believe news reports more than they believe ads (it would be interesting to see an objective analysis of this, especially in light of the Patterson-McClure findings). Thus, political commercials often quote from newspaper stories and editorials, and are frequently structured to look like newscasts. Many campaigns also buy time in or near newscasts on the assumption that the audience is settling into an I'll-believe-what-you-tell-me mentality.

Not surprisingly, ultimate success for a political commercial is to be considered newsworthy. Negative coverage obviously hurts, as occurred last spring when Democratic presidential contender Gary Hart unsuccessfully tried to have

one of his commercials taken off the air. But far more frequently news coverage simply provides a wider, more believing audience. The classic example dates back to a 1964 Lyndon B. Johnson spot in which playful counting by a little girl dissolved into a countdown to nuclear holocaust; it implied that to vote for Barry Goldwater was to welcome carnage. This spot (called the Daisy spot because the little girl was pulling off daisy petals as she counted) was broadcast as a paid commercial only once. The next night all three TV networks ran it in their newscasts, providing the blend of paid and unpaid media that every campaign has dreamed of ever since.

*Packaging the Presidency* and *The Spot* should prove useful to anyone covering campaigns in 1984 and beyond. Both offer well-written, accurate accounts of political spots from their first appearance in 1952 through their mixed record in early 1984; and both provide anecdotes and insights that help put current events in perspective. In 1956, for example, Edward R. Murrow coached Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson on how to improve his TV persona. Apparently no one accused Murrow of compromising his integrity, in sharp contrast to the fuss raised over George F. Will's similar activity on behalf of Ronald Reagan in 1980.

Although they overlap, the books are different. Jamieson takes a wider perspective, placing TV spots in the context of all political advertising. She shows, for example, that today's advertising techniques follow a tradition dating back at least to Thomas Jefferson. Diamond and Bates focus more closely on TV ads; they provide an imaginative final section which divides commercials into "four rhetorical modes" — identifying the candidates and establishing their images, explaining what they stand for, attacking opponents, and depicting "quieter moments of resolution and reflection" — that reveal themselves sequentially as a campaign progresses.

Unfortunately, neither book moves very far beyond straightforward renditions of what happened during past campaigns. We need to know a lot more about how commercials are created, what ideas are rejected, what feedback and testing systems exist, and what ethical standards provide guidance. In light of proposed federal legislation restricting the content, format, length, and frequency of political commercials, we also need to know a lot more about how and why they work. "The very best people in this business," a prominent commercial-maker told Diamond and Bates, "probably understand only about five to seven percent of what it is they do that



**3. Attacking the opponent**

"I like Barry Goldwater. He needs our help"



**4. Moments of resolution**

"President Ford's steady calm leadership has helped put the nation back on track"

all courtesy Edw. Diamond



works." (A related problem is the absence of any good system for archiving commercials. A few museums have spotty collections, but most material of critical historical and political importance still either disappears or fades away into the hands of private collectors, where it remains largely uncatalogued and unavailable.)

In the meantime, these books will hearten those who fear that TV hucksters are raping the republic. "After analyzing some 650 spots produced between 1952 and 1984, studying the techniques of the political advertising trade, and interviewing nineteen of the most active media managers," Diamond and Bates write, "we found not so much magic as routine." Jamieson reaches a similar conclusion: "Advertising, whether brilliant or banal, is powerless to dislodge deeply held convictions anchored in an ample amount of credible information."

Thus, political commercials leave journalists with the same duty they had before electronic wizardry dominated campaigns: to keep the public supplied with facts.

## Giving the game away

### Turned-on TV/Turned-off Voters: Policy Options for Election Projections

by Percy H. Tannenbaum and Leslie J. Kostrich  
Sage Publications. 240 pp. \$25.00

by MICHAEL SCHUDSON

The task that this book sets for itself — to review the evidence that social scientists have gathered as to how (and whether) election results are affected by the early broadcast of exit polls and election projections, and to consider what, if anything, should be done — would seem to be a hopelessly dull one. The research is a bore. And on top of that, as authors Percy Tannenbaum and Leslie

*Michael Schudson is associate professor of communication and sociology at the University of California, San Diego. He is the author of Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers.*

Kostrich wonder aloud, the whole matter may well be trivial, only "a vexing blemish" on our electoral system. And yet their study genuinely clarifies this widely debated issue and deserves attention from journalists, broadcasters, and makers of public policy.

Most studies find that election projections and exit polls have little or no impact on voting. But much of the research is methodologically flawed, while, as it happens, a few of the most careful studies do find evidence of impact. An important University of Michigan study, for instance, concludes that early projections depressed national voter turnout in 1980 by as much as 6 to 11 percent. Tannenbaum and Kostrich find this result bizarre, too big to be credible, and they offer serious methodological objections to the Michigan report. Still, they conclude that the burden of proof has now shifted toward the networks.

In any event, the most likely effect of projections is not on the presidential vote but on close congressional races on the West Coast. Early projections may keep people from voting by making them be-

## When the legal drinking age goes down,

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lieve that the presidential election is all over. This could hurt West Coast Democrats in close contests because Democrats tend to go to the polls later in the day than Republicans. (On the other hand, Democrats are less likely than Republicans to listen to news broadcasts and so are less likely to be affected by them.)

**B**ut with all the other influences that lead a person to vote or not to vote, election projections are, at most, a marginal factor. The concern is, of course, that it is by just such margins that elections get decided. In 1980, incumbent California Representative James C. Corman (Democrat) lost by .5 percent and Oregon Representative Al Ullman (also a Democrat) lost by 1 percent. Did the early projections (and Carter's premature concession an hour before polls closed in the West) make the difference? Perhaps, but we do not know, and social science research is not well equipped to ferret out small effects of this sort. Tannenbaum and Kostrich argue that conclusive evidence will not

be forthcoming short of unthinkably massive investment in further study.

This means that we are left to quarrel over reform without full assurance that lack of reform has serious consequences. It is much more clear that people object to the network practices than that the network practices actually interfere with the electoral process. But suppose, as Tannenbaum and Kostrich do, that one wants to reform the system just on the chance that the small effects of election projections will from time to time make a difference in electoral outcomes. What policy options are there?

Tannenbaum and Kostrich systematically take up a variety of proposals (most of which have appeared in Congress at one time or another in the past decade) and discuss the advantages and shortcomings of each. Polls in the West could close earlier. Polls in the East could stay open longer. Election Day could be moved to a Sunday and polling hours made uniform. Election Day could be made a holiday. Voting could be for a twenty-four-hour period beginning Monday evening and ending before the

Tuesday evening news broadcasts. Congress could challenge the networks' right to broadcast election projections. State legislatures could make exit polling more difficult — as the state of Washington has done (in a statute that the networks and *The New York Times* are challenging on First Amendment grounds). Citizens could sabotage exit polls by not speaking — or by lying — to network pollsters. The networks could choose on their own not to broadcast early projections until polls have closed.

The authors' own inclination is to combine voluntary restraint by the networks with changes in polling hours on the West Coast. At the same time, they confess to a kind of ironic affection for the sabotage solution. "It is not that we feel early projections to present such a dreadful problem that they have to be gotten rid of at any price," they explain. "Actually, we feel that the freedom of the press is far too much to give up for such a practice. But exit polls are really not much of a free media issue; they are another in a series of games by which the broadcast networks . . . carry out

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their precious but petty internal competitions."

The appeal that sabotage holds for the authors hints at one shortcoming of most of the proposals considered in the book: they are emotionally unsatisfying. The authors evaluate each option according to six criteria. A proposed public policy should be (1) legal, (2) effective at solving the problem it addresses, (3) equitable, with costs distributed in some relationship to likely benefits, (4) economically feasible, (5) politically feasible, and (6) administratively workable. But a seventh criterion never surfaces: a public policy should be just. In particular, the costs of correcting a problem should be shouldered in large part by the agency that caused it. If a chemical company endangers the people in its neighborhood by improper waste disposal, the benefits of improved disposal accrue to the neighbors, but one expects that the costs of new disposal facilities should be

borne in significant measure by the company.

The concern about early projections is not just that they will have a major impact but that the networks have acted with disdain for the electoral process. Maybe a change in polling hours in California could repair a lot of the potential damage of projections, but it seems unjust that Californians should have to go out of their way to work around a problem that network intransigence, and little else, caused in the first place. Yet the networks do not budge and, instead, wrap themselves in the cloak of the First Amendment (a cloak that should probably be kept for special nights out so that it does not wear thin from overuse).

The easiest solution would clearly be restraint on the part of the networks. In Canada, television stations are prohibited by law from carrying the national CBC network feed until polls close in their provinces. This system could easily

work in the United States. As Tannenbaum and Kostrich observe, it is standard practice already for prime-time network programs to be carried on a delayed basis in western time zones, and even the evening news is delayed so that it can be broadcast at a later, more convenient — and more profitable — hour.

If the networks do not adopt, by self-regulation, a solution of this sort, it is not likely to be imposed on them. The First Amendment will be rhetorically invoked and the networks will very likely not get caught this time around. Tannenbaum and Kostrich's elegant analysis leads me to believe that the issue is probably not earthshaking, though the Michigan study makes one wonder. But the networks' response to public concern is earthshaking. There is a real issue about the behavior of the television networks, which seem almost proud to whittle away their own public support by stubborn stands on stupid platforms.

Ask a simple question: if the networks' primary concern were to make the television election coverage as helpful as possible to the creation of a lively democratic process, what position on this matter would they take? It is hard to imagine that it would be the one they take now. Clearly they have put something else ahead of a concern for democracy — be it money or pride or the mania of competition or a kind of bully's resistance to being pushed around. *Advertising Age*, in a charming editorial (March 5, 1984), argued that the networks could hold their audiences, and advertisers, longer if they released projections later, rather than earlier and earlier. Obviously money is not the issue here so much as the cycles of pettiness and ego that develop in its pursuit.

The networks may point to Tannenbaum and Kostrich's book because it suggests that their practices have a very limited influence on the way elections turn out. On the other hand, it also reveals the vulnerability of the available research: we just do not know that the projections have *not* made a difference, nor can we discount the possibility that they will in 1984, 1988, or some future election. The networks can continue to stonewall. They are, thus far, free to do so. But how wise?

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"That's 36 for Hart, 35 for Mondale, 3 for Duarte, 1 for D'Aubuisson, 24 against double-trailer trucks and 22 that say yes, they'd like the polls to exit"





The heat was on the station. Their stock footage illustrating an arson report showed her building blazing. She thought it made her look like an arsonist. So she sued for libel. But the T.V. station won. And ERC coolly paid their expenses. Because for just this kind of unforeseeable conflagration, we pioneered libel insurance over 50 years ago. And we keep innovating to meet your changing legal needs. Talk to your broker about libel insurance from the expert. Employers Reinsurance Corporation.

**THIS FIRE TOOK  
A YEAR TO PUT OUT.**



## Chain reactions

### The Buying and Selling of America's Newspapers

Edited by Loren Ghiglione  
R. J. Berg & Co. 200 pp. \$21.95

by CHRIS WELLES

The debate has been raging for years: Are profit-hungry newspaper chains debasing journalism by stifling the editorial freedom and constricting the news product of the once-vigorous independent papers they are so furiously gobbling up? Or are the chains, in fact, invigorating their acquisitions with superior management, new investment capital, and improved editorial coverage?

To bring some empirical evidence to bear on a dispute previously marked mostly by rhetoric, Loren Ghiglione, editor and publisher of the *News* in Southbridge, Massachusetts, and himself president of a twelve-paper chain, enlisted a group of journalists and journalism educators to examine ten geographically diverse, family-owned dailies that have sold out to chains in recent years. Avoiding such widely publicized deals as Rupert Murdoch's purchase of the *New York Post* and the

Chris Welles is director of the Bagehot Fellowship program at Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism and a staff writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, the flagship paper of *The Times Mirror Company*.

*Boston Herald*, Ghiglione selected smaller papers — with circulations of 6,000 to 47,000 — that are more typical chain properties. (A caveat to readers: most of the research for the book was apparently done in 1981 and 1982 and has been updated only superficially, if at all.)

The findings of *The Buying and Selling of America's Newspapers* are illuminating and deserve scrutiny by anyone interested in the newspaper business, especially those who think they hold well-founded views on the chaining issue.

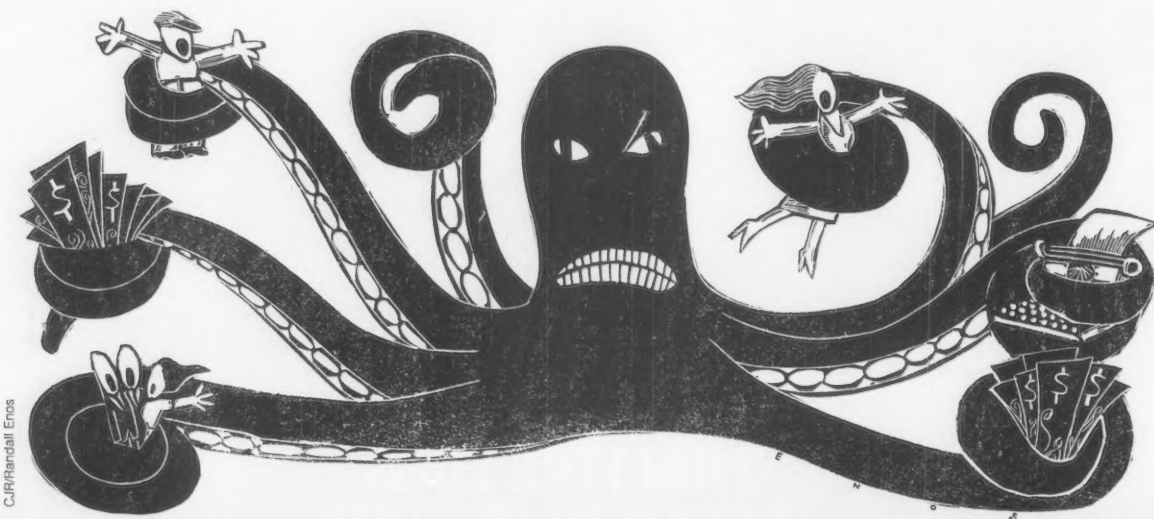
The book's principal conclusion is that conclusions are very difficult to come by. Some chains, according to the book, have indeed vitiated their acquisitions. For example, under independent ownership the *Transcript* of North Adams, Massachusetts, was, according to the New England Press Association, the best small daily in the six-state region. After becoming part of Ingersoll Publications (twenty-two other dailies), it degenerated seriously, with a shrunken news hole, editorial budget, and reporting staff, and, in the opinion of most independent observers, a diminished editorial product.

On the other hand, some chains have improved their new properties. When McClatchy Newspapers acquired the *Anchorage Daily News* in 1979, the paper had already declined to a shadow of its once-illustrious former self and was all

but out of business. McClatchy invested millions of dollars to modernize the production plant, increase the editorial staff from nine to forty-six, and expand news coverage. Knight-Ridder (thirty papers) has had a similarly beneficial impact on the *Centre Daily Times* in State College, Pennsylvania.

In still other cases, results have been mixed. Following the purchase of *The New Mexican* in Santa Fe by Gannett (eighty-five papers) in 1976, editorial salaries were raised and some aspects of the paper's coverage were improved. But the paper began to run less local news and encountered decreased acceptance by the local community, due in part to what many regarded as its occasional insensitivity to local issues. Said Santa Fe resident Bill Mauldin, the cartoonist, "This is a very colorful, very special sort of corner of the world, and I think a newspaper that represents it should represent the city and what goes on here. And it just seems to me that [*The New Mexican*] is very standard — it could be printed in Hutchinson, Kansas, or Amarillo or Pecos, Texas. Essentially it lacks character. It particularly lacks the character of the place that it's being printed in."

Though the accounts in this book address it only implicitly, they raise another issue that is perhaps more fundamental than the impact of chain ownership on editorial quality: To what



CHRIS WELLES





CJR/Randall Enos

extent are profits tied to editorial quality? Or, to put it in practical terms, does hiring one more reporter to cover the state house pay off on the bottom line?

That issue needs to be viewed from the perspective of the great structural evolution now under way in the newspaper business. The gradual agglomeration of independents into chains — twenty groups now control more than half the daily circulation — is a belated part of a broad transformation of American business from small, privately held enterprises operated by their owners into large, publicly held corporations run by professional managers. The separation of ownership and management has long been regarded by many business commentators as a key to the strength of American capitalism.

Individual proprietors and professional managers frequently have quite different ideas about what a firm's goals ought to be, and nowhere is that more true than in the newspaper business. Many, if not most, of the family owners in this book did not regard their papers primarily as profit-making ventures. To Hodding Carter and other members of his family who owned the *Delta Democrat-Times* in Greenville, Mississippi, prior to its sale to Freedom Newspapers (thirty-one papers) in 1980, the publication was the instrument for a courageous crusade against racial injustice. To the Howe and Allingham families, the *Atchison Daily Globe*, now part of

the Thomson Newspapers chain (eighty-nine papers in the U.S.), was a vehicle to enhance the welfare of the small farming and milling town in northeastern Kansas.

These worthy pursuits did not always presuppose superior journalism. The four generations of the Hardman family who ran the *Transcript* did regard exceptional editorial performance as virtually the entire *raison d'être* of the enterprise. Yet *Buying and Selling* often serves to deflate overly romantic notions of the virtues of family-directed small-town newspapering. According to *New York Times* reporter Ben A. Franklin, the history of the *News* and *Daily Advance* of Lynchburg, Virginia (now part of Worrell Newspapers), was "atrocious," characterized, in at least one instance, by "raw abuse of the power of the press" and by coverage that "toppled every tenet of professionalism and fairness." The papers' owners, members of the Glass family, became, writes Franklin, "the object of scorn and hatred in their own community." And even though the *Delta Democrat-Times*, according to journalist authors Lloyd Gray and Tony Tharp, achieved a reputation as "one of the liveliest and gutsiest little papers in the country," *Time* magazine commented in 1976 that Hodding Carter and other liberal southern newspaper editors were "more distinguished for the strength of their conviction

than the quality of their coverage."

Family newspaper owners in this book were not, of course, entirely oblivious to financial concerns in formulating operating objectives. Nevertheless, *Buying and Selling* chronicles instance after instance of indifferent or inept business management: ineffectual circulation and advertising policies, careless personnel practices, and inattention to production efficiencies. Several owners paid niggardly salaries and required reporters to labor long hours under almost sweatshop-like conditions. If budgets were prepared at all, they were usually ignored. Said the executive editor of the *Transcript* under the Hardmans, "I was never particularly concerned with the budget. I never knew how much there was in the budget." As many editors at family papers seemed to see it, ignorance of financial matters was almost a matter of pride; to dwell upon profits seemed to represent a compromise of editorial integrity.

Almost without exception, the family owners showed little interest in fostering a system of permanent management that could continually replace itself. Many of the sellouts to chains occurred because owners lost interest in their papers, began squabbling among themselves, got old and were unable to find any younger family members willing to take the paper over, or were afraid of stiff inheritance taxes.

In distinct contrast, the chain man-



agers, like most corporate executives, are preoccupied with the bottom line. Their initial move, upon acquiring the newspapers in this book, has invariably been to set financial goals and improve advertising, circulation, and production productivity — with usually impressive results. Almost without exception, chain owners have accorded their properties editorial independence, though they often have brought in outsiders as editors and publishers. Their philosophy of editorial budgeting has usually been one of cost-effectiveness: What return can be expected from the investment? As business enterprises, virtually all of the papers in *Buying and Selling* are much better managed than before.

What, then, accounts for the mixed editorial consequences of chain ownership? One is drawn unavoidably to the conclusion that, beyond a certain point, editorial excellence does not produce concomitant fiscal payoffs. It may even incur fiscal penalties.

The case of the *Transcript* is illustrative. To maintain its august reputation, the paper had a news staff twice the size one might expect at a paper its size and a ratio of news to advertising far above other papers in its region. Not surprisingly, the paper's profitability was marginal. By cutting the staff and news hole, among other changes, Ingersoll has quintupled profits — despite what journalists agree has been the paper's editorial decline. "Eighty percent of all that Ingersoll does is usually good for his papers," said Rod Doherty, executive editor of the *Transcript*, who served two years under Ingersoll until he was fired in 1981, "but that last twenty percent is just enough to drop the papers below a quality product. I always felt frustrated knowing that it was possible to have a good newspaper and successful fiscal management, if they didn't need such a high profit margin."

Most of the chains in this book seek the highest possible profit margin and see no reason to raise budgets for what they would regard as redundant editorial quality. They know that lousy papers usually turn off readers and advertisers and would probably not be very profitable. But if they think they can get by without another statehouse reporter,

they won't hire one.

Executives of those chains in *Buying and Selling* that have significantly improved the papers they have acquired, such as Knight-Ridder and McClatchy, have a slightly different attitude. Though they do not say so in so many words, at least not in this book, they seem willing to accept a somewhat lower profit margin in the interests of superior coverage. It is instructive that descendants or relatives of early family owners still play a dominant role at, and are major shareholders of, Knight-Ridder and McClatchy and other chains with a reputation for high journalistic standards, such as the New York Times Company, the Washington Post Company, and the Times Mirror Company. These chains have managed to preserve some measure of the best editorial instincts of the old family owners — even though much, if not most, of their stock

is often held by public stockholders who may not be aware of any deviation from a strict bottom-line philosophy. Whatever its advantages for American capitalism generally, complete separation of ownership and management in the newspaper business, it would seem, could have a deleterious impact on the quality of American newspaper journalism.

None of this may impress admirers of the old *Transcript* and other papers whose pursuit of editorial excellence made little concession to the bottom line. The Knight-Ridder and McClatchy papers in this book have their share of critics who contend that the papers ought to be much better. But if the chaining of the American newspaper business continues unabated, diverting a few bucks from the bottom line for an extra body in the statehouse may be the most that discriminating newspaper readers can hope for.

## Images in black & white

**None But Ourselves: Masses vs. Media in the Making of Zimbabwe**

by Julie Frederikse  
Penguin. 368 pp. \$16.95

by KEVIN SACK

Three months before the stunning landslide election in 1980 of black socialist Robert Mugabe as the first prime minister of newly independent Zimbabwe, National Public Radio sent reporter Julie Frederikse to join the throng of nearly a thousand foreign journalists recording the birth of Africa's youngest nation. The twenty-six-year-old Frederikse was less intrigued by the outcome of the election, which followed a fifteen-year civil war in what had formerly been Rhodesia, than by the white minority establishment's failure to forecast it.

In the aftermath of the upset, interviews that Frederikse taped with black villagers, guerrilla leaders, and white

*Kevin Sack is a staff writer with the Atlanta Journal and Constitution. He recently returned from an eight-month stay in southern Africa on a Rotary Foundation Fellowship.*

bureaucrats revealed an ironic pattern of a mass media campaign misdirected by government officials mistakenly convinced that they "knew their Africans." It is this campaign that Frederikse brilliantly documents in *None But Ourselves*. From distorted history books that denied the achievements of precolonial African civilizations to news coverage of the black guerrilla movements that downplayed their strength, Rhodesia's mass media fostered a false impression of black incompetence and white invincibility.

Using the techniques of oral history to juxtapose the thoughts and perceptions of whites with those of blacks, and packed with reproductions of newspaper pages, confidential memos, and photographs from the bushland war, Frederikse's book will be fascinating reading to students of African history and third world media. It will be equally fascinating to those who are simply interested in media manipulation and the use of the press as a tool of war.

Frederikse begins by describing the racist perceptions historically nurtured by white Rhodesians. "The African loves laughter," according to "The Man and His Ways," a pamphlet published by the Rhodesian Ministry of Informa-



tion. "His needs are few and simple and when he is satisfied he is inclined to sit back." Following the philosophy of Information Minister P. K. van der Byl, who emerges in the book as the Rhodesians' top blunderer, the government began a program of censorship in 1959 because it suspected the media of encouraging Soviet expansionism. At first, newspapers printed blank spaces on their front pages to indicate the government's blue-penciled stories, but the practice soon gave way to a self-censorship that lasted throughout the war years.

By the mid-1960s, when Rhodesia's government divorced itself from British control, Prime Minister Ian Smith was promoting Rhodesia as a bastion of "Western Christian civilization." Pamphlets and advertisements encouraging whites to vote for Smith's party declared "We're Here to Stay."

Black villagers, meanwhile, were unaffected by patronizing government propaganda, including air-dropped pamphlets, comic books, dummy newspapers, and the declarations of puppet chiefs portraying the guerrillas as blood-thirsty terrorists. The guerrillas indoctrinated the willing villagers with both their political philosophies and their military dreams in late-night sessions called *pungwes*, which featured the singing of nationalistic *chimurenga* songs. They taught their supporters to listen to Mozambiquan and Soviet radio rather than Rhodesian stations.

As the war intensified, the government's tactics became less subtle. With van der Byl declaring that "the most effective propaganda" is the bayonet, blacks were shown films of a hyena devouring the mutilated remains of killed guerrillas. A military "psychological operations unit" promoted the display of dead guerrillas to their families and closed its eyes to occasional "skull-bashing" raids on Rhodesian villages.

Even after losing the war, the government pressed on with strong-arm media techniques in support of Bishop Abel Muzorewa's campaign for the prime ministership. Mugabe was smeared in forged newspaper articles and his rival's publicity stressed the evils of commu-

nism, but it was all to no avail.

What is omitted from Frederikse's book is a postscript on the tragic history of the press in postwar Zimbabwe. As has often been the case in modern Africa, the victorious rebels have adopted the policies of their former masters. Television and most of the newspapers in

Zimbabwe are controlled by Mugabe's government and foreign press coverage has been restricted. As Mugabe struggles to consolidate his takeover, the media's view of Zimbabwean events almost always reflects the view of Mugabe himself. The propaganda war in Zimbabwe continues. ■

## The Responsibilities of Journalism

Edited by Robert Schmuhl

"... raises thoughtful and important questions about journalistic responsibilities..." —Lou Cannon, *The Washington Post*

What responsibilities do journalists have to their audiences? To their subjects? What moral principles do, or should, underlie news reporting? What impact does journalism have on society?

In a profession that has been called "an ethical jungle," these questions have caused increasing concern among journalists and their public. Integrating the diverse perspectives and experiences of print and broadcast journalists, businessmen, ethicists, philosophers, and government representatives, *The Responsibilities of Journalism* addresses this concern. It amounts to a fascinating account of the status of journalism today.

Edwin Newman  
Georgie Anne Geyer  
Elie Abel  
Robert J. McCloskey  
Max Lerner  
Jeff Greenfield  
Leonard Silk  
John E. Swearingen  
Lisa Sowle Cahill  
John G. Craig, Jr.  
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Rev. Oliver Williams

"... so pertinent to our times... we should heed the lessons and admonitions it contains."

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"This book is a model of the informed and compelling way issues ought to be debated."

—Clifford G. Christians,  
Co-author, *Responsibility in Mass Communications*

Notre Dame Press  
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

cl. \$13.95



# BRIEFINGS

by GLORIA COOPER

## Five uneasy pieces

**The Media, Public Opinion, April/May 1984**

Here are five variations on the ever-popular theme of public opinion and the press, composed by a number of well-known media-watchers and arranged by the business-oriented American Enterprise Institute. Sure to enliven the critical repertoire, the pieces will no doubt sound especially sweet to conservative ears.

In the opening number, for instance, peripatetic press critic Edwin Diamond, dispelling the myth of the liberal-dominated news media, cites their record-breaking, rich-get-richer profits and their centrist establishment line, as well as the immeasurable power of editorially conservative, top-circulation publications (*The Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Daily News*, *Reader's Digest*, *TV Guide*), the incomparable reach of conservative radio commentator Paul Harvey (farther than that of his statist colleagues), and the phenomenal rise of syndicated columnists of a conservative stripe. A second offering, by former Reagan White House director of communications David Gergen, takes its cue from the contradictory, post-Grenadan assessments by Louis Harris and *Time* magazine of the public's sentiments about the fourth estate; after surveying other studies in the field, Gergen concludes that neither "Dr. Pangloss" nor "Dr. Gloom" is entirely correct. Although the public still tends to give more credibility to a story from a journalist than from a high-ranking government official, Gergen's analysis notes, it also keenly resents the mass media for inaccuracies, bias, and too much bad news; looks more favorably on its local news media than on the national press; and, where matters of national security and public morality are concerned, is more eager than the Supreme Court to censor and suppress.

A more original effort, in which AEI fellow Michael Jay Robinson and researcher Maura Clancey report on the findings of a scientific survey designed "to gauge the thickness of Reagan's Teflon coating," reveals that it isn't only negative news about the president that fails to penetrate and stick in the public mind but, in fact, just about all

political news. The study finds that most Americans, for instance, indeed believe that the president is more likely to follow strict ethical principles than are the members of his administration — but it also finds that they are blessedly unaware of the financial indiscretions of Edwin Meese, the taping indiscretions of Charles Z. Wick (three-quarters of those surveyed had never heard his name), and the nominal indiscretions of Gary Hart-pence. (One comforting note to Madison Avenue: almost 44 percent of the public was able to identify the slogan that Mondale had used to criticize Hart, and of those, some 88 percent could even give the sponsor's name.)

But the major work on the AEI program is a preliminary analysis of the media coverage of the 1984 primaries that documents what every losing candidate will affirm and what most news people will deny: the causal connection between the amount and kind of coverage and the outcome at the polls. Conducted by William C. Adams, a professor at George Washington University, the study examines the weeknight newscasts on CBS and NBC during the four-week period from before the Iowa caucuses to Super Tuesday. Focusing on the coverage of Gary Hart, Adams traces a rollercoaster pattern of bouncing attention, free rides, rough sideswipes, and sudden brakes. Significantly, Adams observes, those who made up their minds on whom to vote for soon after Hart's success in New Hampshire were more inclined to favor him with their votes than were those who made their decision on subsequent primary evenings, presumably because of the in-



creasingly negative coverage that the networks gave to Hart.

By way of a finale, researchers Stanley Rothman, Linda S. Lichter, and S. Robert Lichter, favorites on the conservative circuit for their evocative pieces on the liberal bias of the press, present their most recent composition, inspired this time by *CJR*. Evaluating as "liberal" or "conservative" some 3,329 "message units" two-and-three-quarter-inches and one-and-three-quarter-inches long — segments produced by carving up 126 randomly selected articles published in the *Columbia Journalism Review* from 1972 to 1981 (have their subscriptions expired?) — the researchers discern an overwhelming tilt toward a liberal worldview. And, like any conscientious social scientist, Rothman and the Lichters define their terms — albeit in puzzling ways that tend to confuse political ideology with the most basic of journalistic principles. According to the researchers, for example, statements in *CJR* articles that focused on the structure of the media "were coded as liberal when they criticized journalists for allowing their stories to be influenced by advertisers, business, or similar vested interests." The liberal category, they go on, also "included references to group ownership of media outlets or media conglomerates as creating ethical conflict, suppression of diversity, or reducing the quality of reporting," as well as "criticism of attempts to control media content as a violation of constitutional rights or an infringement on the newsgathering process." Indeed, such "liberal" views were found to prevail in three cases out of four. With criticism like that, who needs praise?

## Trade secrets

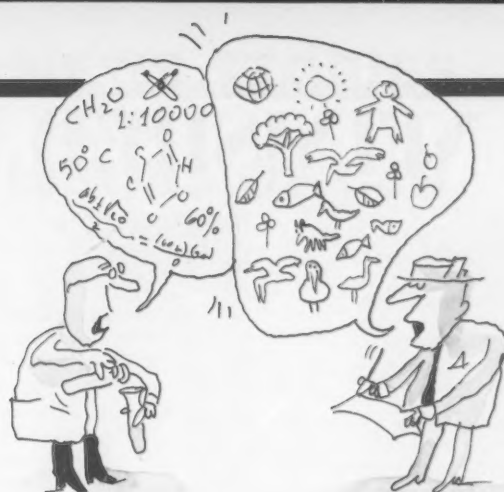
**The IRE Book**, by Investigative Reporters & Editors, 98 pp. \$10.00

Reports of the death of investigative journalism have been greatly exaggerated, judging from the vigorous output represented here. Produced by the professional organization devoted to the genre's preservation and growth, this oversized paperback is nothing more — and nothing less — than a collection of vital statistics about 91 of the 315 entries (14 of them winners) submitted in the IRE's contest for the best investigative work appearing on radio and television and in newspapers, magazines, and books in 1983. Besides providing a synopsis of the investigation and a summary of its major findings and results, each fact sheet explains how the story got started, lists the major types of documents and human sources used, offers



advice to reporters planning similar projects, and describes the difficulties and uniqueness of effort that the project entailed. Thus, for all its bare-bones structure, the format allows for plenty of rich and instructive detail.

For example, while many of the stories originated with a tip or chance remark, others began with the keen perceptions of a journalist at work: a *Science Digest* piece that started out as a look at lung transplants turned into an investigation into the effects of the chemical paraquat when two lung recipients turned out to have been poisoned by the toxic spray; the *Roanoke Times* and *World-News's* disclosures of the failings of the city's proud volunteer rescue squad began when staffers listening to newsroom radio monitors noticed the long delays in responding to calls. Similarly, advice to those planning other such projects is concrete and concise: "Bring the cameras in early before sources get cold feet," urges a WBRZ-TV reporter in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, sharing the lessons of his experience in documenting cocaine abuse among business professionals; "Copy as many documents as possible in their entirety," suggest the writers of a *Philadelphia Inquirer* series on the government's mishandling of radioactive waste, "[for] what may seem unimportant in January may be critical in March." Glimpses of drama appear here as well: an investigation into the high death



CJRNiculae Asciu

## Risky news

**Science in the Streets**, Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on the Communication of Scientific Risk, Priority Press, 97 pp. \$7.50

Rarely has the concept of the culture gap advanced in the fifties by C. P. Snow been more readily apparent than in the present tensions between science and journalism, and seldom is it dramatized more tellingly than in cases involving manmade risk. From oil spills to acid rain, from DES to DNA, from California's medfly sprays to Missouri's toxic dumps, high-stakes technological controversies inexorably give rise to parallel controversies over their coverage by the press. Not surprisingly, the conflict extends to the effort at hand, an eight-month study of problems in communicating such risks that draws on testimony from an impressive array of representatives of the two cultures — and concludes that their differences may be well nigh unresolvable. (A sprinkling of footnotes by Des Moines Register and Tribune Company president and task force member Michael Gartner, for instance, conveys his strenuous objections to, among other things, the report's assertion that scientific uncertainty is not reflected in the press; at the same time, scientist and former astronaut Harrison E. Schmidt, the task force chairman, dissenting from the majority view that the news media have done a pretty good job in reporting on technological risk, challenges the press to replace its "whatever-the-cost" philosophy with a less "irresponsible" approach, including some restraint on the release of alarming news.)

Thus, with tidy solutions so unforthcoming, the study's chief virtue is in telling and showing why. Synthesizing criticism of the coverage of four technological controversies — nuclear power, Three Mile Island, Love Canal, and the swine flu vaccination program — an evenhanded background paper by so-

ciologist Dorothy Nelkin indicates the respective problems of bias, sensationalism, reporter involvement, and government manipulation illustrated by each. The report also scrutinizes the inherently contradictory value systems that scientists and journalists live by in the gathering, interpretation, and disclosure of facts about risk (a dichotomy reinforced, the study notes, by the controversial policies of such publications as the *New England Journal of Medicine*, which refuses to publish findings whose substance has previously been reported elsewhere in the press). Other chapters examine the difficulties in accurate coverage posed by self-serving sources (bureaucrats, environmentalists, industry spokesmen, scientists "with a mission") and outline those journalistic failings, such as a generally limited expertise in science and statistics and a tendency to focus on human interest stories, that can lead to distortions of the truth. Finally, retracing the fascinating course of the media's treatment of the more current story of AIDS, former *New York Times* reporter Harry Schwartz persuasively demonstrates how the scientific, journalistic, and political forces discussed by Nelkin actually operate in shaping the news.

So what's to be done? Not an awful lot, it seems, judging from the bland and predictable recommendations on which the task force managed finally to agree: courses for journalists in the scientific method; the production of a primer to aid in interpreting technological information; the establishment of organizations modeled on the Scientists' Institute for Public Information to provide journalists with a broad range of information during crisis situations; more frequent forums for scientists and journalists. Oh, yes: Harrison Schmidt notwithstanding, a majority of the task force also agreed to endorse the concept of the public's right to know, a not inconsiderable achievement for this contentious bunch.



CJRNiculae Asciu

rates at a California hospital that took one UPI reporter on a blindfolded trip to the house of a doctor who was afraid that the reporter might be a hospital-administration spy; an *Ashbury Park Press* inquiry into the drug-abuse problems of New Jersey doctors that drew pleas for compassion as well as suicide threats. ("Don't let them intimidate you," is the reporter's advice.) A worthy supplement to *The Reporter's Handbook* published last year, the collection is sure to be appreciated by working journalists, teachers, and anyone else who follows the state of the investigative art.



# UNFINISHED BUSINESS

## The CIA talks back

### TO THE REVIEW:

Re: "Warning: CIA Censors at Work" by Jack Hitt (CJR, July/August). Etched in a marbled wall of CIA's headquarters is a biblical verse that reads, "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." One would suppose that the flagship publication of a prestigious school of journalism would be similarly inspired, but alas . . .

In the more glaring examples quoted below, the truth was — incredibly — disclosed to the author beforehand:

□ "Stockwell is the author of a critical book about the agency and had a tough go with the board." *Not true. He never had any "go with the board" at all, since he violated his agreement and never submitted his book for prior review.*

□ "Copeland not only bypassed the censor, he bragged about doing so. . . ." *Not true. He submitted his book for review. It contained no classified information.*

□ Howard Hunt . . . had been told by the CIA that he need no longer submit his work for review. . . . [O]ne would think that Hunt's spy novels would be combed for leaks. But they are not." *Not true. Hunt has never been exempted. He routinely submits in advance to the standard search for classified material.*

□ "You may call it looking the other way," says Charles Wilson, chairman of the Publications Review Board. "I call it living in the real world." This followed the foregoing false statement that Hunt's novels are not reviewed. The quotation is precise, but it was uttered not about Hunt but about William F. Buckley, who, as mentioned in a completely different part of the article, worked at CIA for only a few months more than thirty years ago!

Unbelievable? There is more. Anyone interested in the truth may contact me.

CHARLES E. WILSON  
Publications Review Board  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D.C.

Jack Hitt replies: *Mr. Wilson is correct that Stockwell declined a formal review by the board, but he neglects to add why. In his book, In Search of Enemies, Stockwell explains that "when I spoke out about the most*

*flagrant mismanagement that I knew about which occurred during the evacuation of Vietnam, I was politely and gently admonished. The culprit was given a position of authority, vindicated by the support of his colleagues, and I was informed that I had better keep my peace." In short, Stockwell's tough go was with his superiors at the CIA, not with the review board.*

*My source on Miles Copeland's bypassing the censor and bragging about it is Copeland himself. In the foreword to his book, Copeland writes: "I must make it clear, however, that no one at the CIA, the British Secret Intelligence Service or any other official agency has 'cleared' this book. . . . I have been my own censor, and if I have included cases and information that have until now been held under tight security wraps, it is because I cannot accept the reasons for their continued secrecy."*

*My source on Howard Hunt's exemption from review are Mr. Wilson himself and, as I made clear in my article, William F. Buckley. In the January 31, 1983, New Yorker article that I cited, Buckley wrote: "Howard received a note from headquarters — something on the order of 'Howard, you write books faster than our staff can review them, so let's put you on your honor. For the time being, provided you don't use your real name, we'll let you publish your books unreviewed by us, trusting you not to reveal any information that might hurt the United States.'" Mr. Wilson's statement about "living in the real world" was made in the course of a discussion of writers who do not submit their work for review. In asking him about Buckley's exemption, I naturally mentioned Hunt's. Mr. Wilson said, "Yes, we've looked at Hunt's stuff. Not all of it, but some of it, and he's been very cooperative."*

## Newsline hangs tough

### TO THE REVIEW:

David Helvarg's article on Newsline ("San Diego: Newsline's Bottom Line," CJR, July/August), leaves several misconceptions that need to be corrected.

Helvarg states that Newsline "broke from tradition" in endorsing Republican Roger Hedgecock for mayor of San Diego last spring and implies that this endorsement was

linked to the fact that Newsline's major financial investor at the time, Nancy Hoover, was a close friend and political ally of Hedgecock. The fact of the matter is that there was no break with tradition in Newsline's endorsement of Hedgecock. This was not the first time Newsline had supported Hedgecock for election. In 1980, long before Nancy Hoover became a major investor in the paper, Newsline endorsed him for reelection to the Board of Supervisors. I supported Hedgecock because he was an environmentalist, grass-roots Republican running against a probusiness, establishment Democrat.

The second problem with Helvarg's story is that it strongly implies that Newsline somehow lost its journalistic credibility by becoming involved with Nancy Hoover, who has since herself become embroiled in a major scandal. Helvarg makes his case by quoting other people's observations — none of which are backed up by specific examples.

Obviously, the key issue is how our news (as opposed to our editorial) coverage of Hedgecock, who is so closely tied to Hoover, stood up during the past year. And I'd like to say unequivocally that I'm proud of our coverage and will put it up against anybody's. To wit:

□ Until this recent round of scandals, Newsline was the only paper in San Diego to have run hard-nosed exposés about conflicts of interest involving Hedgecock. One, concerning a development called Honey Springs, tied Hedgecock's aides, business partners, and campaign contributors together in a story that saw Hedgecock voting on matters affecting the project. The second involved revelations that Hedgecock owned a parcel of land adjacent to an area slated for development — a disclosure that forced the mayor to sell his property in order to participate in the controversial deliberations on the subject.

□ During last year's mayoral campaign, reporters from the local dailies — especially the *Los Angeles Times* and *The San Diego Union* — repeatedly praised our coverage. And a cover story I wrote on the eve of the election, which lambasted both candidates, subsequently won San Diego Press Club honors as the "Best of Show" for all articles entered in that year's competition.

□ Following Hedgecock's election, another major article I penned, titled "Roger Hedge-



# REVIEW THE TOP NEWS STORIES OF THE '80's THROUGH BACK ISSUES OF CJR



**May/June 1980**  
Jacobso Timerman,  
Walter Cronkite,  
monopoly games



**March/April 1981**  
*Daily News*, hostage  
families, White House  
beat



**March/April 1982**  
Gay news, public  
authorities, Chicago-  
style journalism



**May/June 1982**  
Voice of America,  
Mexican muckraking,  
newsroom marriages



**July/August 1982**  
Clampdown on leaks,  
Murdoch's *Post*, *Daily News* diary



**Sept/Oct 1982**  
Newspaper Guild, black  
press, UPI



**Nov/Dec 1982**  
Covering Lebanon,  
computer journalism,  
South Africa's "free" press



**Jan/Feb 1983**  
Special section on libel,  
cable TV, Woodstein in  
Des Moines



**March/April 1983**  
*USA Today*, videotex,  
Philadelphia after the  
*Bulletin*



**May/June 1983**  
Reagan and the press,  
Soviet photojournalism,  
covering the nonprofits



**Sept/Oct 1983**  
EPA, Murdoch's *Times*,  
*Washington Monthly*



**Nov/Dec 1983**  
El Salvador, Texas  
journalism, Vietnam  
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The author issues a special invitation to his students at the University of Nebraska, Michigan State University, University of Montana, Pennsylvania State University, Northwestern University and the University of California at Berkeley to take advantage of this update.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

cock's New Establishment," detailed Hedgecock's ties to Hoover, among other people. This article, too, won journalism awards and was even used in the campaign literature of Hedgecock's mayoral opponent this year as proof of Hedgecock's tie to the now-troubled Hoover.

Perhaps there are ways that *Newsline* was "soft" on Hedgecock and Hoover. But if that be true, then let Mr. Helvarg make the case by citing the facts and analyzing the substance of the issue — our actual week-to-week coverage of the mayor — instead of relying on rumor and innuendo.

LARRY REMER  
Editor-Publisher  
San Diego *Newsline*  
San Diego, Calif.

David Helvarg replies: *Newsline* has indeed given Mayor Hedgecock a few good licks. However, the point is not whether the paper's coverage of Hedgecock was tilted in his favor — opinions in *San Diego* differ on this matter — but whether Remer had an obligation to tell his readers about the financial support he was getting from Nancy Hoover.

If Larry Remer, investigative reporter, had discovered, for example, that San Diego Union publisher Helen Copley (whose paper endorsed Hedgecock's opponent, Maureen O'Connor) had had secret business dealings with O'Connor's husband, he probably would have been the first to charge conflict of interest and insist on the public's right to know. Yet even after publishing "Roger Hedgecock's New Establishment," Remer chose to keep his \$350,000 partnership with Hedgecock's close friend and financial backer Nancy Hoover a secret. Had it not been for that partnership, *San Diego's* "alternative" paper would have had at least a chance of breaking the J. David story, one of the biggest financial scandals in the city's history.

### Now who's sexist?

TO THE REVIEW:

I had to laugh when I read your Dart (July/August) for sexist writing which described a female distance runner as a "lanky brunette" and a male distance runner as a "former firefighter." I laughed because earlier in the same issue ("San Diego: *Newsline's* Bottom

Line") you referred to "tall, attractive" Nancy Hoover but did not provide physical descriptions of the other subjects of the article, all men. I guess you've earned a Dart of your own.

CYNTHIA GOLDSTEIN  
Assistant professor of journalism  
University of Northern Iowa  
Cedar Falls, Ia.

### The secret tapers

TO THE REVIEW:

In "Secret Taping — A No-no for Nixon but Okay for Reporters?" (CJR, July/August), Alan R. Ginsberg advises journalists to surreptitiously tape conversations when there is no other way to nail down key elements of a story and when the story is in the "public interest." His "public interest" standard is elusive and elastic and therefore meaningless. The practical consequence of his advice, if followed, would be to make secret taping by journalists commonplace.

This would put journalists who taped phone conversations at odds with the FCC, as Ginsberg acknowledged, but he appears to advocate violating the FCC rule. His advice, moreover, would place journalists lower than lawyers in terms of ethical scruples. The American Bar Association's Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility declared in 1974 that "no lawyer should record any conversation whether by tapes or other electronic device, without the consent or prior knowledge of all parties to the conversation."

The journalist who followed Ginsberg's advice could open himself and his employer to damage suits. The Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals said, in finding the press liable for secretly transmitting and recording a conversation, "We strongly disagree . . . that the hidden mechanical contrivances are 'indispensable tools' of newsgathering. . . . The First Amendment is not a license to trespass, to steal or to intrude by electronic means into the precincts of another's home or office." Also, the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals recently ruled that secret recording of an interview may, under certain circumstances, violate the Federal Wiretap Statute.

The journalist best serves the public interest by not engaging in sneaky, deceptive,



dishonest, or underhanded practices. Secret taping is all of those things. That is why its use should be severely restricted, preferably to law-enforcement agencies.

GILBERT CRANBERG  
George H. Gallup Professor  
School of Journalism and  
Mass Communication  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Ia.

Alan Ginsberg replies: *I agree that journalists should not secretly record telephone conversations when it is illegal to do so. While it is true, as I noted, that telephone companies are directed by the FCC to discontinue service to customers who tape without either informing the other party or signaling with a beep tone, the rule, strictly speaking, applies only to the phone companies, not to the tapers. Moreover, the FCC is concerned only with interstate calls, so many telephone conversations do not fall into the proscribed category.*

*The U.S. Court of Appeals decision quoted by Professor Cranberg is Dietemann v. Time Inc., 449 F2nd 245 (1971). Circuit Judge Hufstедler stated clearly that the case involved the law of the state of California, not federal law. (The case was in federal court because the litigants were from different states.) Also, this case did not involve telephone taping, which was the subject of my discussion. The Dietemann decision asserts that, under California law, a magazine whose reporters gained entrance to the plaintiff's home through "subterfuge," then secretly photographed the plaintiff and recorded his conversation without his knowledge or consent, was liable for invasion of privacy. This case involved clearly intrusive behavior, and I agree with the decision.*

*California is one of the thirteen states which have statutes covering secret telephone taping. The California law contains exceptions which allow secret taping for the purpose of gathering evidence of certain felonies, and some California courts have inferred that taping telephone calls without informing the other party is not prohibited. In Georgia, where a statute makes it illegal for "any person intentionally and secretly to intercept by the use of any device, instrument, or apparatus the contents of a message sent by telephone . . .," the Georgia Su-*



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*preme Court has nevertheless held that secret taping by one of the participants in a telephone conversation is not prohibited. Since the law is always in flux, and subject to judicial interpretation, journalists should consult qualified legal counsel about the law of their respective states.*

### Moon's Times

#### TO THE REVIEW:

I suppose I ought to feel either grateful or lucky that I escaped the poison pen of Bryan Abas ("Inside the Paper God Wanted," *CJR*, May/June) and got instead what I take to be a favorable mention.

I feel rather soiled, as if I had been kissed by Judas.

If you want an answer to the rhetorical question "Why do people hate the press?" posed in the same issue, you need look no farther than your publication of Mr. Abas's cute little smear. I don't presume to speak for the rest of the paper, but I can say that Mr. Abas was in no position to know very much of anything about the national staff. His "research" apparently advanced him little beyond that point of ignorance. To my knowledge, he never bothered to talk to reporters on the national staff who would have given a different view of *The Washington Times* than his article conveys.

There probably is a good, solid story to be written about *The Washington Times*. But neither you nor Mr. Abas have got it right yet.

TOM DIAZ  
Springfield, Va.

Bryan Abas replies: *In addition to the innumerable conversations I had with reporters of the Times's national staff while I worked there, I interviewed about half a dozen present and former national reporters after I left.*

### The ombudsbiz

#### TO THE REVIEW:

Cassandra Tate's article, "What Do Ombudsmen Do?" (*CJR*, May/June) contained a paragraph that any fair ombudsman in the country would, on balance, consider unfair.

She wrote that Lane Smith, *The Seattle*

*Times's* ombudsman, "rarely deal[s] with major sins of commission or omission at the *Times*, looking instead at points of grammar, minor errors of fact, matters concerning the comics or the crossword." She chided Smith for advising readers how to order special-section reprints, for praising well-written headlines, and for noting that the word "please" had been added to front-page jump lines. "When Smith does find fault with a significant story, his criticism tends to be muted," she wrote — citing a case in which a reader complained that a business reporter had mixed opinion with fact, and Smith's column allowed the reporter to tell his side of the story.

Tate overlooked numerous examples of significant criticism or illuminating analysis. Last December, for instance, Smith courageously stepped into a hot dispute between the news and editorial departments about a photograph we had published; the point at issue was whether we should reprint the photo when we ran a letter to the editor criticizing it as racist and sexist. (The photo ran with Smith's column, along with the text of the letter and an explanation of the flap.) This year Smith has criticized a reporter's questionable use of an anonymous source, criticized the design of a Sunday news-roundup page, criticized a sloppy rewriting and editing job, criticized a reporter and editor for allowing an ethnic slur to be published, and criticized the *Times* for violating its own policy on use of a rape victim's name.

True, Smith also has used the ombudsman's column to explain the *Times's* corrections policy to readers, to defend a three-page layout on Seattle's gay community from reader criticism, to analyze the media's role as "kingmaker" for Gary Hart, to discuss *The Wall Street Journal* case involving "insider" stock information, and to analyze *The Christian Science Monitor's* stories (which the *Times* reprinted) on the CIA-death squads connection.

For the record: Smith's column runs in the Sunday Issues section, of which I am editor. However, the ombudsman answers only to editor Jim King on questions of content.

JOHN HAMER  
Issues editor  
*The Seattle Times*  
Seattle, Wash.

#### TO THE REVIEW:

Cassandra Tate's article about the newspaper watchdogs called "ombudsmen" described very well what they do. It didn't, however, go into what they *don't* do, or, for that matter, what nobody does now that the National News Council is gone: watch over the electronic news media. Even in newspapers without ombudsmen there's always the letter-to-the-editor section. Not so at the network radio and TV news operations.

What, for instance, is one to do if he hears, as I did in mid-April, ABC sportscaster Brian Madden end his radiocast with a cheap shot about the Soviet press? Madden's personal observation was in reaction to a comment made by a Soviet news source that the rumor of a Soviet boycott of the Olympics had originated in a poorly written article in the Soviet press. Madden's final comment: "Well, aren't they all [poorly written]?"

Since ABC has no ombudsman, I wrote to Roone Arledge and to Brian Madden — and, of course, received no reply from either. In fact, my letter to Madden was returned unopened.

As Tate pointed out in her article, "ombudsmen do not prevent sins," but they might, in the realm of the airwaves, help to keep personal bias and international put-downs out of sports and newscasting. These are already being too well handled by government officials on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

JOHN F. GREENMAN  
Producer/Public Affairs  
Maine Public Broadcasting Network  
Orono, Me.

### The VDT 'evidence'

#### TO THE REVIEW:

In the Darts and Laurels section of your May/June issue, you score *The New York Times* for failing to mention, in an article on the effects of computer technology on office workers, "the urgent need for strong measures to protect the health and safety of VDT workers plagued by deteriorating vision . . . and the fear (based on accumulating evidence) of a link between radiation emissions from VDTs and multiple birth defects. . . ."

You should be ashamed of yourself for publishing such tendentious statements with-



out even an "alleged" in there anywhere, when the facts are so clearly otherwise. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the American Medical Association's Advisory Panel on Reproductive Hazards in the Workplace, the American Council on Science and Health, the March of Dimes, and the National Institutes of Health have all studied these claims and formally pronounced them baseless.

It is especially irritating to see you use the term "accumulating evidence" in the way our sloppiest journalists do — to mean an increase in the number of news releases and television interviews — rather than in its original sense of scientifically collected and verified information.

LEE LEVITT  
Executive vice-president  
PR Aids  
New York, N.Y.

The editors reply: *We agree that the use of the term "accumulating evidence" was wrong. But to speak of "disturbing indications" of a possible link between VDTs and miscarriages and birth defects would certainly seem appropriate, given that the facts of the matter are not "so clearly otherwise" as Mr. Levitt claims.*

*For one thing, the number of clusters of miscarriages and birth defects has steadily risen: eleven such clusters have now been reported. Even the respected Harvard Medical School Health Letter, while asserting that "the clustering of reported problems is quite likely to be the result of a statistical accident," goes on to say that "the question of reproductive difficulties is still unsettled." (The Health Letter, incidentally, fails to note that it is only offices with VDTs that are reporting such statistical "accidents.")*

*Moreover, it seems to us that the reassuring findings cited by Mr. Levitt are somewhat premature, inasmuch as almost no research has been done in the field of very low frequency radiation and even less in that of very low frequency pulsed radiation, the kind associated with VDTs. Nor are there any federal standards for the VLF frequency range. Thus, the assertion reiterated in many of the reports listed by Mr. Levitt — namely, in the words of the Harvard Health Letter, "that leakage is well below present standards for*

*occupational exposure" — would seem to be rather hollow.*

*The pioneer in the field of pulsed magnetic fields is Dr. José M. R. Delgado, formerly a professor of physiology at Yale, now director of the research laboratory of the Centro Ramon y Cajal Hospital in Madrid. Microwave News has been reporting his findings, and the controversy surrounding them, for nearly two years. A major 1982 experiment carried out by Delgado showed that pulsed magnetic fields at extremely low frequencies can have a "consistent and powerful" effect on the growth and development of fertilized chick embryos, a finding whose relevance to humans remains to be investigated. The EPA is now going to try to repeat Delgado's experiment. NIOSH, for its part, has put "a very high priority" on an epidemiological study focusing on VDT work. (Journalists interested in following the continuing VDT story may wish to order VDT News: 1983 Health and Safety Update, published by the editors of Microwave News, whose address is P.O. Box 1799, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10163.)*

### The Fall River story

#### TO THE REVIEW:

As a journalist and editor, I have long been aware of the quality content of the *Columbia Journalism Review*. I was especially impressed with "The Gang-rape Story" (CJR, May/June). Media mention of the victim's name is unnecessary, serving only to further traumatize the victim. Certainly it is our responsibility to report the facts accurately and fairly. But publicizing the gang-rape victim's name added little to the story, while increasing her emotional trauma.

LORI A. DAVIS  
Research/Copy Editor  
The Saturday Evening Post  
Indianapolis, Ind.

### Let's get this straight

#### TO THE REVIEW:

The *Columbia Journalism Review* cannot (but why not?) be held responsible for inanities in letters in *Unfinished Business*. Yet Arnie Matanky's preposterous statements in the July/August issue about Larry Green's

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## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

piece on Rupert Murdoch's purchase of the *Chicago Sun-Times* ("Murdoch Hits Chicago! City Strikes Back!") CJR, May/June) should not stand unchallenged.

Contrary to his assertion that the *Sun-Times* was not a liberal newspaper after Pete Akers became its editor in 1959, it remained — and in many ways strengthened its reputation as such — a liberal newspaper through Akers's editorship and those of Emmett Dedmon and James Hoge right up to the present, when its editorial hue took on, for the most part, a conservative tinge. Yet even Murdoch's *Sun-Times* did speak out strongly against red-baiting aldermen who challenged the appointment of the city's new cultural czar, Fred Fine, because of Fine's political leftism decades ago.

Both as a *Sun-Times* editor and as a reader of Mike Royko's column, I cannot recall any "anti-Semitic columns" which Matanky cites — and I believe I've rarely, if ever, missed Mike's pieces in the *Sun-Times* or previously in the *Chicago Daily News*, of blessed memory.

HERMAN KOGAN  
Corporate historian  
Field Enterprises  
Chicago, Ill.

## Corrections

In "San Diego: *Newsline's* Bottom Line" (July/August), Gregory Dennis was wrongly identified as a "publicist at [Nancy] Hoover's consulting firm." Dennis worked as a political consultant for the firm. Moreover, the *Review's* shorthand description of that firm may have misled some readers; Hoover, as the article pointed out, was a principal investor in the firm, but did not control it.

A Briefings item in the July/August issue mistakenly employed masculine pronouns when referring to Scott McGehee, managing editor of *The Detroit Free Press*. McGehee is a woman.

A Laurel in the May/June issue erroneously identified Ohio University as the source of a study on racism in the Detroit media. The correct affiliation of the researchers is Ohio State University.

## Deadline

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# Bringing you the good news

With thousands of newspapers and magazines, network and cable television news, and radio bulletins all day long, Americans are without doubt the most informed people in the world.

Whether they are the best informed is another question. One reason for this is that good news isn't news. It doesn't make our flesh creep like a good disaster does. Its entertainment value is minimal. And no reporter made his reputation by reporting good news, anyway.

But this lack of balance in the news can undermine our confidence in our country's future. So, in a small effort to even the score, here's a selection of good news we think should be more prominently reported. The figures come from *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1984*, put out by the Census Bureau.

- Americans are getting healthier. A baby born in 1982 can expect to live to age 75, compared with age 70 for one born in 1960.

- The roads are getting safer. Deaths per 100 million motor vehicle miles were down to 2.8 in 1982, compared with 5.3 in 1965.

- Education is improving. Over 12 million students were in college in the fall of 1982, compared with 7.3 million in 1970. Of people over 25 years of age, over 70 percent were high school graduates in 1982, compared with 41 percent in 1960.

- As a nation, we are enjoying sports more. Compared with 1970, twice as many people are playing softball and tennis. Attendance at major league baseball games climbed from 29 million to 45 million between

1970 and 1982. More people are watching professional basketball, hockey, and horse racing. Cynics may look down on spectator sports. But—as Ben J. Wattenberg points out in his forthcoming book *The Good News Is The Bad News Is Wrong*—they're missing a big point: People today have more money in their pockets to spend on such activities.

- Culture is on the upgrade. Symphony and opera ticket sales doubled to over 32 million between 1970 and 1982. Private business support for theaters, museums, symphony orchestras, public radio and television, art and culture centers, art funds and councils, and art exhibitions was up nearly tenfold between 1967 and 1979—\$26 million to \$233 million, in constant 1970 dollars.

- More Americans can afford to travel abroad—over 8 million in 1982 compared with 5 million in 1970.

- We are reading more, not fewer, books in this age of visual communication. While the number of homes owning video game consoles jumped from 700,000 in 1977 to 14 million in 1982, the number of books sold increased from 1.5 billion in 1977 to 1.7 billion in 1981.

- We're investing more in the future. Total R&D outlay in both the public and private sectors is up from \$19.6 billion in 1960 to an estimated \$39.6 billion in 1983, in constant 1972 dollars.

We could go on. But we've made our point. For the world's problems, see the TV and newspaper headlines. For the good news, you have to dig a little deeper. But it's there, and it's just as real.

Have a good day!

**Mobil**



# The Lower case



## 3 hospitals get OK to do transplants

Akron Beacon Journal  
7/27/84

## Clinic gives poor free legal help

The Montgomery Journal (Rockville, Md.) 6/8/84

## Apartment owners whipping boys

Kitchener-Waterloo (Ont.) Record 6/8/84

## Babies are what the mother eats

The Times-Herald (Newport News, Va.) 7/11/84

## Jobless Assist Swells

The Times Argus  
(Barre-Montpelier, Vt.) 6/2/84

### GARDEN PESTS TALK AT CLUB MEETING

White River Valley Herald  
(Randolph, Vt.) 7/19/84

## Pope plans a slight headache

Fort McMurray Today (Alberta, Can.) 7/20/84

## Threatened by gun, employees testify

The Messenger (Athens, O.) 6/19/84

## People quit burning coal town

Santa Monica Evening Outlook 5/30/84

Zimmerman's top assistant in charge of the investigation, Robert Kench, declined comment on the Press's reports on both the bookie's and Colville's comments.

Zimmerman also begged off. So did the State Police Commissioner Daniel F. Dunn, who had died.

The Observer (Philadelphia, Pa.) 6/11/84



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